





360  
Melgreen.









LEAVES  
*of*  
GRASS.

Washington, D. C.

1872.

*Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1870, by*  
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## CONTENTS.

|                                                   |             |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>INSCRIPTIONS.</b>                              | <b>PAGE</b> |
| One's-Self I Sing.....                            | 7           |
| As I Ponder'd in Silence.....                     | 7           |
| In Cabin'd Ships at Sea.....                      | 8           |
| To Foreign Lands.....                             | 9           |
| To a Historian.....                               | 10          |
| For Him I Sing.....                               | 10          |
| When I read the Book.....                         | 10          |
| Beginning my Studies.....                         | 11          |
| To Thee Old Cause !.....                          | 11          |
| Starting from Paumanok.....                       | 13          |
| The Ship Starting.....                            | 27          |
| Unfolded out of the Folds.....                    | 28          |
| To You.....                                       | 28          |
| Walt Whitman.....                                 | 29          |
| Laws for Creations.....                           | 96          |
| Visor'd.....                                      | 96          |
| <br><b>CHILDREN OF ADAM.</b>                      |             |
| To the Garden the World.....                      | 97          |
| From Pent-up Aching Rivers.....                   | 97          |
| I Sing the Body Electric.....                     | 100         |
| A Woman Waits for Me.....                         | 109         |
| Spontaneous Me.....                               | 111         |
| One Hour to Madness and Joy.....                  | 113         |
| We Two—How long We were Fool'd.....               | 114         |
| Out of the Rolling Ocean, the Crowd.....          | 115         |
| Native Moments.....                               | 116         |
| Once I pass'd through a Populous City.....        | 117         |
| Facing West from California's Shores.....         | 117         |
| Ages and Ages, Returning at Intervals.....        | 118         |
| O Hymen ! O Hymenee !.....                        | 118         |
| As Adam, Early in the Morning.....                | 118         |
| I Heard You, Solemn-sweet Pipes of the Organ..... | 119         |
| I am He that Aches with Love.....                 | 119         |
| To Him that was Crucified.....                    | 120         |
| Perfections.....                                  | 120         |
| <br><b>CALAMUS.</b>                               |             |
| In Paths Untrodden.....                           | 121         |
| Scented Herbage of My Breast.....                 | 122         |
| Whoever You are, Holding me now in Hand.....      | 124         |
| These, I, Singing in Spring.....                  | 125         |
| A Song.....                                       | 127         |
| Not Heaving from My Ribb'd Breast Only.....       | 128         |
| Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances.....         | 128         |
| The Base of all Metaphysics.....                  | 129         |
| Recorders Ages Hence.....                         | 130         |

| CALAMUS.                                         | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------------------|------|
| When I heard at the Close of the Day.....        | 131  |
| Arc you the New person, drawn toward Me?.....    | 132  |
| Roots and Leaves Themselves Alone.....           | 132  |
| Not Heat Flames up and Consumes.....             | 133  |
| Trickle, Drops.....                              | 134  |
| City of Orgies.....                              | 134  |
| Behold this Swarthy Face.....                    | 135  |
| I saw in Louisiana a Live Oak Growing.....       | 135  |
| To a Stranger.....                               | 136  |
| This moment, Yearning and Thoughtful.....        | 136  |
| I hear it was Charged against Me.....            | 137  |
| The Prairie-Grass Dividing.....                  | 137  |
| We Two Boys Together Clinging.....               | 138  |
| A Promise to California.....                     | 138  |
| Here the Frailest Leaves of Me.....              | 138  |
| When I peruse the Conquer'd Fame.....            | 139  |
| What think You I take my Pen in Hand?.....       | 139  |
| A Glimpse.....                                   | 140  |
| No Labor-Saving Machine.....                     | 140  |
| A Leaf for Hand in Hand.....                     | 140  |
| To the East and to the West.....                 | 141  |
| Earth! my Likeness!.....                         | 141  |
| I Dream'd in a Dream.....                        | 141  |
| Fast Anchor'd, Eternal, O Love.....              | 142  |
| Sometimes with One I Love.....                   | 142  |
| That Shadow, my Likeness.....                    | 142  |
| Among the Multitude.....                         | 143  |
| To a Western Boy.....                            | 143  |
| O You Whom I Often and Silently come.....        | 143  |
| Full of Life, Now.....                           | 144  |
| Salut au Monde.....                              | 145  |
| A Child's Amaze.....                             | 158  |
| The Runner.....                                  | 158  |
| Beautiful Women.....                             | 158  |
| Mother and Babe.....                             | 158  |
| Thought.....                                     | 158  |
| American Feuillage.....                          | 159  |
| Song of the Broad-Axe.....                       | 165  |
| Song of the Open Road.....                       | 177  |
| LEAVES OF GRASS.                                 |      |
| I sit and Look Out.....                          | 189  |
| Me Imperturbe.....                               | 189  |
| As I lay with my Head in your Lap, Camerado..... | 190  |
| Crossing Brooklyn Ferry.....                     | 191  |
| With Antecedents.....                            | 199  |
| THE ANSWERER.                                    |      |
| Now list to my Morning's Romanza.....            | 201  |
| The Indications.....                             | 204  |
| Poets to Come.....                               | 206  |
| I Hear America Singing.....                      | 207  |
| The City Dead House.....                         | 208  |
| A Farm-Picture.....                              | 208  |
| Carol of Occupations.....                        | 209  |
| Thoughts.....                                    | 218  |
| The Sleepers.....                                | 219  |
| Carol of Words.....                              | 231  |
| Ah Poverties, Wincings and Sulky Retreats.....   | 233  |
| LEAVES OF GRASS.                                 |      |
| A Boston Ballad, 1854.....                       | 239  |
| Year of Meteors, 1859-'60.....                   | 241  |

# CONTENTS.

v

|                          | PAGE |
|--------------------------|------|
| A Broadway Pageant.....  | 243  |
| Suggestions.....         | 248  |
| Great are the Myths..... | 249  |
| Thought.....             | 252  |

## LEAVES OF GRASS.

|                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| There was a Child went Forth.....  | 253 |
| Longings for Home.....             | 255 |
| Think of the Soul.....             | 257 |
| You Felons on Trial in Courts..... | 258 |
| To a Common Prostitute.....        | 259 |
| I was Looking a Long While.....    | 259 |
| To a President.....                | 260 |
| To The States.....                 | 260 |

## DRUM-TAPS.

|                                        |     |
|----------------------------------------|-----|
| Drum-Taps.....                         | 261 |
| 1861.....                              | 264 |
| Beat! Beat! Drums!.....                | 265 |
| From Panmanok Starting.....            | 266 |
| Rise, O Days.....                      | 267 |
| City of Ships.....                     | 269 |
| The Centenarian's Story.....           | 270 |
| An Army Corps on the March.....        | 276 |
| Cavalry Crossing a Ford.....           | 276 |
| Bivouac on a Mountain Side.....        | 277 |
| By the Bivouac's Fitful Flame.....     | 277 |
| Come up from the Fields, Father.....   | 278 |
| Vigil Strange I Kept on the Field..... | 280 |
| A March in the Ranks, Hard-prest.....  | 281 |
| Sight in Camp.....                     | 282 |
| Not the Pilot, &c.....                 | 283 |
| As Toilsome I Wander'd.....            | 284 |
| Year that Trembled.....                | 284 |
| The Dresser.....                       | 285 |
| Long, too Long, O Land!.....           | 288 |
| Give me the Splendid, Silent Sun.....  | 288 |
| Dirge for Two Veterans.....            | 290 |
| Over the Carnage.....                  | 292 |
| The Artilleryman's Vision.....         | 293 |
| I saw Old General at Bay.....          | 294 |
| O Tan-faced Prairie Boy.....           | 295 |
| Look Down, Fair Moon.....              | 295 |
| Reconciliation.....                    | 295 |
| Spirit whose Work is Done.....         | 296 |
| How Solemn as One by One.....          | 297 |
| Not Youth Pertains to Me.....          | 297 |
| To the Leaven'd Soil They Trod... ..   | 298 |

## LEAVES OF GRASS.

|                                               |     |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----|
| Faces.....                                    | 299 |
| Manhattan Streets I Sannter'd, Pondering..... | 303 |
| All is Truth.....                             | 307 |
| Voices.....                                   | 308 |

## MARCHES NOW THE WAR IS OVER.

|                                              |     |
|----------------------------------------------|-----|
| As I sat Alone by Blue Ontario's shores..... | 309 |
| Pioneers! O Pioneers!.....                   | 327 |
| Repondez!.....                               | 333 |
| Turn, O Libertad.....                        | 337 |
| Adieu to a Soldier.....                      | 337 |
| As I walk These Broad, Majestic Days.....    | 338 |
| Weave in, Weave in, My Hardy Life.....       | 339 |
| Race of Veterans.....                        | 340 |
| O Sun of Real Peace.....                     | 340 |

|                                                    |      |
|----------------------------------------------------|------|
| LEAVES OF GRASS.                                   | PAGE |
| This Compost.....                                  | 341  |
| Unnamed Lands.....                                 | 343  |
| Mannahatta.....                                    | 345  |
| Old Ireland.....                                   | 346  |
| To Oratists.....                                   | 347  |
| Solid, Ironical, Rolling Orb.....                  | 348  |
| BATHED IN WAR'S PERFUME.                           |      |
| Bathed in War's Perfume.....                       | 349  |
| Delicate Cluster.....                              | 349  |
| Song of the Banner at Day-Break.....               | 350  |
| Ethiopia Saluting the Colors.....                  | 357  |
| Lo! Victress on the Peaks.....                     | 358  |
| World, Take Good Notice.....                       | 358  |
| Thick-Sprinkled Bunting.....                       | 359  |
| A Hand-Mirror.....                                 | 360  |
| Germes.....                                        | 360  |
| LEAVES OF GRASS.                                   |      |
| O Me! O Life!.....                                 | 361  |
| Thoughts.....                                      | 361  |
| Beginners.....                                     | 362  |
| SONGS OF INSURRECTION.                             |      |
| Still, though the One I sing.....                  | 363  |
| To a foil'd European Revolutionaire.....           | 363  |
| France, the 18th year of These States.....         | 365  |
| Europe, the 72d and 73d years of These States..... | 367  |
| Walt Whitman's Caution.....                        | 369  |
| To a Certain Cantatrice.....                       | 369  |
| LEAVES OF GRASS.                                   |      |
| To You.....                                        | 370  |
| SONGS OF PARTING.                                  |      |
| As the Time Draws Nigh.....                        | 373  |
| Years of the Modern.....                           | 373  |
| Thoughts.....                                      | 375  |
| Song at Sunset.....                                | 377  |
| When I heard the Learn'd Astronomer.....           | 380  |
| To Rich Givers.....                                | 380  |
| Thought.....                                       | 380  |
| So Long.....                                       | 381  |



## INSCRIPTIONS.



### ONE'S-SELF I SING.

<sup>1</sup> ONE'S-SELF I sing—a simple, separate Person ;  
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word *En-masse*.

<sup>2</sup> Of Physiology from top to toe I sing ;  
Not physiognomy alone, nor brain alone, is worthy for  
the muse—I say the Form complete is worthier  
far ;  
The Female equally with the male I sing.

<sup>3</sup> Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,  
Cheerful—for freest action form'd, under the laws di-  
vine,  
The Modern Man I sing.



### AS I PONDER'D IN SILENCE.

#### 1

As I ponder'd in silence,  
Returning upon my poems, considering, lingering long,  
A Phantom arose before me, with distrustful aspect,  
Terrible in beauty, age, and power,

The genius of poets of old lands,  
 As to me directing like flame its eyes,  
 With finger pointing to many immortal songs,  
 And menacing voice, *What singest thou ?* it said ;  
*Know'st thou not, there is but one theme for ever-enduring*  
*bards ?*  
*And that is the theme of War, the fortune of battles,*  
*The making of perfect soldiers ?*

## 2

*Be it so, then I answer'd,*  
*I too, haughty Shade, also sing war—and a longer and*  
*greater one than any,*  
*Waged in my book with varying fortune—with flight, ad-*  
*vance, and retreat—Victory deferr'd and wavering,*  
*( Yet, methinks, certain, or as good as certain, at the last, )*  
*—The field the world ;*  
*For life and death—for the Body, and for the eternal Soul,*  
*Lo ! I too am come, chanting the chant of battles,*  
*I, above all, promote brave soldiers.*



## IN CABIN'D SHIPS AT SEA.

## 1

In cabin'd ships, at sea,  
 The boundless blue on every side expanding,  
 With whistling winds and music of the waves—the  
 large imperious waves—In such,  
 Or some lone bark, buoy'd on the dense marine,  
 Where, joyous, full of faith, spreading white sails,  
 She cleaves the ether, mid the sparkle and the foam of  
 day, or under many a star at night,  
 By sailors young and old, haply will I, a reminiscence  
 of the land, be read,  
 In full rapport at last.

## 2

*Here are our thoughts—voyagers' thoughts,  
 Here not the land, firm land, alone appears, may then by  
 them be said ;  
 The sky o'erarches here—we feel the undulating deck be-  
 neath our feet,  
 We feel the long pulsation—ebb and flow of endless mo-  
 tion ;  
 The tones of unseen mystery—the vague and vast sugges-  
 tions of the briny world—the liquid-flowing sylla-  
 bles,  
 The perfume, the faint creaking of the cordage, the melan-  
 choly rhythm,  
 The boundless vista, and the horizon far and dim, are all  
 here,  
 And this is Ocean's poem.*

## 3

Then falter not, O book ! fulfil your destiny !  
 You, not a reminiscence of the land alone,  
 You too, as a lone bark, cleaving the ether—purpos'd I  
 know not whither—yet ever full of faith,  
 Consort to every ship that sails—sail you !  
 Bear forth to them, folded, my love—(Dear mariners !  
 for you I fold it here, in every leaf ;)  
 Speed on, my Book ! spread your white sails, my little  
 bark, athwart the imperious waves !  
 Chant on—sail on—bear o'er the boundless blue, from  
 me, to every shore,  
 This song for mariners and all their ships.



## TO FOREIGN LANDS.

I HEARD that you ask'd for something to prove this  
 puzzle, the New World,  
 And to define America, her athletic Democracy ;  
 Therefore I send you my poems, that you behold in  
 them what you wanted.

## TO A HISTORIAN.

You who celebrate by-gones !  
Who have explored the outward, the surfaces of the  
races—the life that has exhibited itself ;  
Who have treated of man as the creature of politics,  
aggregates, rulers and priests ;  
I, habitan of the Alleghanies, treating of him as he is  
in himself, in his own rights,  
Pressing the pulse of the life that has seldom exhibited  
itself, (the great pride of man in himself ;)   
Chanter of Personality, outlining what is yet to be,  
I project the history of the future.

---

## FOR HIM I SING.

For him I sing,  
I raise the Present on the Past,  
(As some perennial tree, out of its roots, the present on  
the past :)  
With time and space I him dilate—and fuse the im-  
mortal laws,  
To make himself, by them, the law unto himself.

---

## WHEN I READ THE BOOK.

When I read the book, the biography famous,  
And is this, then, (said I,) what the author calls a  
man's life ?  
And so will some one, when I am dead and gone, write  
my life ?

(As if any man really knew aught of my life ;  
 Why, even I myself, I often think, know little or nothing  
 of my real life ;  
 Only a few hints—a few diffused, faint clues and indications,  
 I seek, for my own use, to trace out here.)



### BEGINNING MY STUDIES.

BEGINNING my studies, the first step pleas'd me so  
 much,  
 The mere fact, consciousness—these forms—the power  
 of motion,  
 The least insect or animal—the senses—eyesight—  
 love ;  
 The first step, I say, aw'd me and pleas'd me so much,  
 I have hardly gone, and hardly wish'd to go, any farther,  
 But stop and loiter all the time, to sing it in extatic  
 songs.



### TO THEE, OLD CAUSE !

<sup>1</sup> To thee, old Cause !  
 Thou peerless, passionate, good cause !  
 Thou stern, remorseless, sweet Idea !  
 Deathless throughout the ages, races, lands !  
 After a strange, sad war—great war for thee,  
 (I think all war through time was really fought, and  
 ever will be really fought, for thee ;)  
 These chants for thee—the eternal march of thee.

<sup>2</sup> Thou orb of many orbs !  
 Thou seething principle ! Thou well-kept, latent germ !  
 Thou centre !

Around the idea of thee the strange sad war revolving,  
With all its angry and vehement play of causes,  
(With yet unknown results to come, for thrice a thousand years,)  
These recitatives for thee—my Book and the War are one,  
Merged in its spirit I and mine—as the contest hinged on thee,  
As a wheel on its axis turns, this Book, unwitting to itself,  
Around the Idea of thee.



STARTING FROM PAUMANOK.

1

<sup>1</sup> STARTING from fish-shape Paumanok, where I was  
born,  
Well-begotten, and rais'd by a perfect mother ;  
After roaming many lands—lover of populous pavements ;  
Dweller in Mannahatta, my city—or on southern savannas ;  
Or a soldier camp'd, or carrying my knapsack and gun  
—or a miner in California ;  
Or rude in my home in Dakota's woods, my diet meat,  
my drink from the spring ;  
Or withdrawn to muse and meditate in some deep recess,  
Far from the clank of crowds, intervals passing, rapt  
and happy ;  
Aware of the fresh free giver, the flowing Missouri—  
aware of mighty Niagara ;  
Aware of the buffalo herds, grazing the plains—the  
hirsute and strong-breasted bull ;  
Of earth, rocks, Fifth-month flowers, experienced—  
stars, rain, snow, my amaze ;  
Having studied the mocking-bird's tones, and the  
mountain-hawk's,  
And heard at dusk the unrival'd one, the hermit thrush  
from the swamp-cedars,  
Solitary, singing in the West, I strike up for a New  
World.

## 2

<sup>2</sup> Victory, union, faith, identity, time,  
The indissoluble compacts, riches, mystery,  
Eternal progress, the kosmos, and the modern reports.

<sup>3</sup> This, then, is life ;  
Here is what has come to the surface after so many  
throes and convulsions.

<sup>4</sup> How curious ! how real !  
Underfoot the divine soil—overhead the sun.

<sup>5</sup> See, revolving, the globe ;  
The ancestor-continent, away, group'd together ;  
The present and future continents, north and south,  
with the isthmus between.

<sup>6</sup> See, vast, trackless spaces ;  
As in a dream, they change, they swiftly fill ;  
Countless masses debouch upon them ;  
They are now cover'd with the foremost people, arts,  
institutions, known.

<sup>7</sup> See, projected, through time,  
For me, an audience interminable.

<sup>8</sup> With firm and regular step they wend—they never stop,  
Successions of men, Americanos, a hundred millions ;  
One generation playing its part, and passing on ;  
Another generation playing its part, and passing on in  
its turn,  
With faces turn'd sideways or backward towards me, to  
listen,  
With eyes retrospective towards me.

## 3

<sup>9</sup> Americanos ! conquerors ! marches humanitarian ;  
Foremost ! century marches ! Libertad ! masses !  
For you a programme of chants.



<sup>10</sup> Chants of the prairies ;  
 Chants of the long-running Mississippi, and down to  
     the Mexican sea ;  
 Chants of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and  
     Minnesota ;  
 Chants going forth from the centre, from Kansas, and  
     thence, equi-distant,  
 Shooting in pulses of fire, ceaseless, to vivify all.

## 4

<sup>11</sup> In the Year 80 of The States,  
 My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this  
     soil, this air,  
 Born here of parents born here, from parents the same,  
     and their parents the same,  
 I, now thirty-six years old, in perfect health, begin,  
 Hoping to cease not till death.

<sup>12</sup> Creeds and schools in abeyance,  
 (Retiring back a while, sufficed at what they are, but  
     never forgotten,)  
 I harbor, for good or bad—I permit to speak, at every  
     hazard,  
 Nature now without check, with original energy.

## 5

<sup>13</sup> Take my leaves, America ! take them, South, and take  
     them, North !  
 Make welcome for them everywhere, for they are your  
     own offspring ;  
 Surround them, East and West ! for they would sur-  
     round you ;  
 And you precedents ! connect lovingly with them, for  
     they connect lovingly with you.

<sup>14</sup> I conn'd old times ;  
 I sat studying at the feet of the great masters :  
 Now, if eligible, O that the great masters might return  
     and study me !

<sup>15</sup> In the name of These States, shall I scorn the antique ?

Why These are the children of the antique, to justify it.

## 6

<sup>16</sup> Dead poets, philosophers, priests,  
Martyrs, artists, inventors, governments long since,  
Language-shapers, on other shores,  
Nations once powerful, now reduced, withdrawn, or  
desolate,

I dare not proceed till I respectfully credit what you  
have left, wafted hither :

I have perused it—own it is admirable, (moving awhile  
among it ;)

Think nothing can ever be greater—nothing can ever  
deserve more than it deserves ;

Regarding it all intently a long while—then dismissing  
it,

I stand in my place, with my own day, here.

<sup>17</sup> Here lands female and male ;

Here the heir-ship and heiress-ship of the world—here  
the flame of materials ;

Here Spirituality, the translatress, the openly-avow'd,  
The ever-tending, the finale of visible forms ;

The satisfier, after due long-waiting, now advancing,  
Yes, here comes my mistress, the Soul.

## 7

<sup>18</sup> The SOUL :

Forever and forever—longer than soil is brown and  
solid—longer than water ebbs and flows.

<sup>19</sup> I will make the poems of materials, for I think they  
are to be the most spiritual poems ;

And I will make the poems of my body and of mortality,

For I think I shall then supply myself with the poems  
of my Soul, and of immortality.

<sup>20</sup> I will make a song for These States, that no one State  
may under any circumstances be subjected to  
another State ;

And I will make a song that there shall be comity by  
day and by night between all The States, and  
between any two of them ;

And I will make a song for the ears of the President,  
full of weapons with menacing points,

And behind the weapons countless dissatisfied faces :

—And a song make I, of the One form'd out of all ;

The fang'd and glittering One whose head is over all ;

Resolute, warlike One, including and over all ;

(However high the head of any else, that head is over  
all.)

<sup>21</sup> I will acknowledge contemporary lands ;

I will trail the whole geography of the globe, and sa-  
lute courteously every city large and small ;

And employments ! I will put in my poems, that with  
you is heroism, upon land and sea ;

And I will report all heroism from an American point  
of view.

<sup>22</sup> I will sing the song of companionship ;

I will show what alone must finally compact These ;

I believe These are to found their own ideal of manly  
love, indicating it in me ;

I will therefore let flame from me the burning fires that  
were threatening to consume me ;

I will lift what has too long kept down those smoulder-  
ing fires ;

I will give them complete abandonment ;

I will write the evangel-poem of comrades, and of love ;

(For who but I should understand love, with all its sor-  
row and joy ?

And who but I should be the poet of comrades ?)

## 8

<sup>23</sup> I am the credulous man of qualities, ages, races ;

I advance from the people in their own spirit ;

Here is what sings unrestricted faith.

<sup>24</sup> Omnes ! Omnes ! let others ignore what they may ;  
I make the poem of evil also—I commemorate that part  
also ;

I am myself just as much evil as good, and my nation  
is—And I say there is in fact no evil ;

(Or if there is, I say it is just as important to you, to  
the land, or to me, as anything else.)

<sup>25</sup> I too, following many, and follow'd by many, inau-  
gurate a Religion—I descend into the arena ;

(It may be I am destin'd to utter the loudest cries there,  
the winner's pealing shouts ;

Who knows ? they may rise from me yet, and soar above  
every thing.)

<sup>26</sup> Each is not for its own sake ;

I say the whole earth, and all the stars in the sky, are  
for Religion's sake.

<sup>27</sup> I say no man has ever yet been half devout enough ;

None has ever yet adored or worship'd half enough ;

None has begun to think how divine he himself is, and  
how certain the future is.

<sup>28</sup> I say that the real and permanent grandeur of These  
States must be their Religion ;

Otherwise there is no real and permanent grandeur :

(Nor character, nor life worthy the name, without Reli-  
gion ;

Nor land, nor man or woman, without Religion.)

## 9

<sup>29</sup> What are you doing, young man ?

Are you so earnest—so given up to literature, science,  
art, amours ?

These ostensible realities, politics, points ?

Your ambition or business, whatever it may be ?

<sup>30</sup> It is well—Against such I say not a word—I am  
their poet also ;

But behold! such swiftly subside—burnt up for Religion's sake;  
 For not all matter is fuel to heat, impalpable flame, the  
 essential life of the earth,  
 Any more than such are to Religion.

## 10

<sup>31</sup> What do you seek, so pensive and silent?  
 What do you need, Camerado?  
 Dear son! do you think it is love?

<sup>32</sup> Listen, dear son—listen, America, daughter or son!  
 It is a painful thing to love a man or woman to excess  
 —and yet it satisfies—it is great;  
 But there is something else very great—it makes the  
 whole coincide;  
 It, magnificent, beyond materials, with continuous  
 hands, sweeps and provides for all.

## 11

<sup>33</sup> Know you! solely to drop in the earth the germs of  
 a greater Religion,  
 The following chants, each for its kind, I sing.

<sup>34</sup> My comrade!  
 For you, to share with me, two greatneses—and a third  
 one, rising inclusive and more resplendent,  
 The greatness of Love and Democracy—and the great-  
 ness of Religion.

<sup>35</sup> Melange mine own! the unseen and the seen;  
 Mysterious ocean where the streams empty;  
 Prophetic spirit of materials shifting and flickering  
 around me;  
 Living beings, identities, now doubtless near us, in the  
 air, that we know not of;  
 Contact daily and hourly that will not release me;  
 These selecting—these, in hints, demanded of me.



<sup>36</sup> Not he, with a daily kiss, onward from childhood  
    kissing me,  
Has winded and twisted around me that which holds  
    me to him,  
Any more than I am held to the heavens, to the spir-  
    itual world,  
And to the identities of the Gods, my lovers, faithful  
    and true,  
After what they have done to me, suggesting themes.

<sup>37</sup> O such themes! Equalities!  
O amazement of things! O divine average!  
O warblings under the sun—usher'd, as now, or at noon,  
    or setting!  
O strain, musical, flowing through ages—now reaching  
    hither!  
I take to your reckless and composite chords—I add to  
    them, and cheerfully pass them forward.

## 12

<sup>38</sup> As I have walk'd in Alabama my morning walk,  
I have seen where the she-bird, the mocking-bird, sat  
    on her nest in the briers, hatching her brood.

<sup>39</sup> I have seen the he-bird also ;  
I have paused to hear him, near at hand, inflating his  
    throat, and joyfully singing.

<sup>40</sup> And while I paused, it came to me that what he  
    really sang for was not there only,  
Nor for his mate, nor himself only, nor all sent back by  
    the echoes ;  
But subtle, clandestine, away beyond,  
A charge transmitted, and gift occult, for those being  
    born.

## 13

<sup>41</sup> Democracy !  
Near at hand to you a throat is now inflating itself and  
    joyfully singing.

<sup>42</sup> Ma femme !

For the brood beyond us and of us,  
For those who belong here, and those to come,  
I, exultant, to be ready for them, will now shake out  
carols stronger and haughtier than have ever yet  
been heard upon earth.

<sup>43</sup> I will make the songs of passion, to give them their  
way,

And your songs, outlaw'd offenders—for I scan you  
with kindred eyes, and carry you with me the  
same as any.

<sup>44</sup> I will make the true poem of riches,  
To earn for the body and the mind whatever adheres,  
and goes forward, and is not dropt by death.

<sup>45</sup> I will effuse egotism, and show it underlying all—and  
I will be the bard of personality ;

And I will show of male and female that either is but  
the equal of the other ;

And sexual organs and acts ! do you concentrate in me  
—for I am determin'd to tell you with courageous  
clear voice, to prove you illustrious ;

And I will show that there is no imperfection in the  
present—and can be none in the future ;

And I will show that whatever happens to anybody, it  
may be turn'd to beautiful results—and I will  
show that nothing can happen more beautiful  
than death ;

And I will thread a thread through my poems that time  
and events are compact,

And that all the things of the universe are perfect mira-  
cles, each as profound as any.

<sup>46</sup> I will not make poems with reference to parts ;

But I will make leaves, poems, poemets, songs, says,  
thoughts, with reference to ensemble :

And I will not sing with reference to a day, but with  
reference to all days ;

And I will not make a poem, nor the least part of a  
poem, but has reference to the Soul ;

(Because, having look'd at the objects of the universe,  
I find there is no one, nor any particle of one,  
but has reference to the Soul.)

## 14

<sup>47</sup> Was somebody asking to see the Soul ?

See ! your own shape and countenance—persons, substances, beasts, the trees, the running rivers, the rocks and sands.

<sup>48</sup> All hold spiritual joys, and afterwards loosen them :  
How can the real body ever die, and be buried ?

<sup>49</sup> Of your real body, and any man's or woman's real body,  
Item for item, it will elude the hands of the corpse-cleaners, and pass to fitting spheres,  
Carrying what has accrued to it from the moment of birth to the moment of death.

<sup>50</sup> Not the types set up by the printer return their impression, the meaning, the main concern,  
Any more than a man's substance and life, or a woman's substance and life, return in the body and the Soul,  
Indifferently before death and after death.

<sup>51</sup> Behold ! the body includes and is the meaning, the main concern—and includes and is the Soul ;  
Whoever you are ! how superb and how divine is your body, or any part of it.

## 15

<sup>52</sup> Whoever you are ! to you endless announcements.

<sup>53</sup> Daughter of the lands, did you wait for your poet ?  
Did you wait for one with a flowing mouth and indicative hand ?

<sup>54</sup> Toward the male of The States, and toward the female of The States,  
Live words—words to the lands.



<sup>55</sup> O the lands! interlink'd, food-yielding lands!  
Land of coal and iron! Land of gold! Lands of cotton, sugar, rice!  
Land of wheat, beef, pork! Land of wool and hemp!  
Land of the apple and grape!  
Land of the pastoral plains, the grass-fields of the world! Land of those sweet-air'd interminable plateaus!  
Land of the herd, the garden, the healthy house of adobie!  
Lands where the northwest Columbia winds, and where the southwest Colorado winds!  
Land of the eastern Chesapeake! Land of the Delaware!  
Land of Ontario, Erie, Huron, Michigan!  
Land of the Old Thirteen! Massachusetts land! Land of Vermont and Connecticut!  
Land of the ocean shores! Land of sierras and peaks!  
Land of boatmen and sailors! Fishermen's land!  
Inextricable lands! the clutch'd together! the passionate ones!  
The side by side! the elder and younger brothers! the bony-limb'd!  
The great women's land! the feminine! the experienced sisters and the inexperienced sisters!  
Far breath'd land! Arctic braced! Mexican breez'd!  
the diverse! the compact!  
The Pennsylvanian! the Virginian! the double Carolinian!  
O all and each well-loved by me! my intrepid nations!  
O I at any rate include you all with perfect love!  
I cannot be discharged from you! not from one, any sooner than another!  
O Death! O for all that, I am yet of you, unseen, this hour, with irrepressible love,  
Walking New England, a friend, a traveler,  
Splashing my bare feet in the edge of the summer ripples, on Paumanok's sands,  
Crossing the prairies—dwelling again in Chicago—dwelling in every town,  
Observing shows, births, improvements, structures, arts,

Listening to the orators and the oratresses in public  
     halls,  
 Of and through The States, as during life—each man  
     and woman my neighbor,  
 The Louisianian, the Georgian, as near to me, and I as  
     near to him and her,  
 The Mississippian and Arkansian yet with me—and I  
     yet with any of them ;  
 Yet upon the plains west of the spinal river—yet in my  
     house of adobie,  
 Yet returning eastward—yet in the Sea-Side State, or  
     in Maryland,  
 Yet Kanadian, cheerily braving the winter—the snow  
     and ice welcome to me,  
 Yet a true son either of Maine, or of the Granite State,  
     or of the Narragansett Bay State, or of the  
     Empire State ;  
 Yet sailing to other shores to annex the same—yet  
     welcoming every new brother ;  
 Hereby applying these leaves to the new ones, from  
     the hour they unite with the old ones ;  
 Coming among the new ones myself, to be their com-  
     panion and equal—coming personally to you  
     now ;  
 Enjoining you to acts, characters, spectacles, with me.

## 16

<sup>56</sup> With me, with firm holding—yet haste, haste on.

<sup>57</sup> For your life, adhere to me !

Of all the men of the earth, I only can unloose you  
     and toughen you ;

I may have to be persuaded many times before I con-  
     sent to give myself really to you—but what of  
     that ?

Must not Nature be persuaded many times ?

<sup>58</sup> No dainty dolce affettuoso I ;

Bearded, sun-burnt, gray-neck'd, forbidding, I have  
     arrived,

To be wrestled with as I pass, for the solid prizes of  
the universe ;  
For such I afford whoever can persevere to win them.

## 17

<sup>59</sup> On my way a moment I pause ;  
Here for you! and here for America!  
Still the Present I raise aloft—Still the Future of The  
States I harbinge, glad and sublime ;  
And for the Past, I pronounce what the air holds of  
the red aborigines.

<sup>60</sup> The red aborigines !  
Leaving natural breaths, sounds of rain and winds,  
calls as of birds and animals in the woods,  
syllabled to us for names ;  
Okonee, Koosa, Ottawa, Monongahela, Sauk, Natchez,  
Chattahoochee, Kaqueta, Oronoco,  
Wabash, Miami, Saginaw, Chippewa, Oshkosh, Walla-  
Walla ;  
Leaving such to The States, they melt, they depart,  
charging the water and the land with names.

## 18

<sup>61</sup> O expanding and swift! O henceforth,  
Elements, breeds, adjustments, turbulent, quick, and  
audacious ;  
A world primal again—Vistas of glory, incessant and  
branching ;  
A new race, dominating previous ones, and grander  
far—with new contests,  
New politics, new literatures and religions, new in-  
ventions and arts.

<sup>62</sup> These! my voice announcing—I will sleep no more,  
but arise ;  
You oceans that have been calm within me! how I  
feel you, fathomless, stirring, preparing unpre-  
cedented waves and storms.

## 19

- <sup>63</sup> See! steamers steaming through my poems!  
 See, in my poems immigrants continually coming and landing ;  
 See, in arriere, the wigwam, the trail, the hunter's hut, the flat-boat, the maize-leaf, the claim, the rude fence, and the backwoods village ;  
 See, on the one side the Western Sea, and on the other the Eastern Sea, how they advance and retreat upon my poems, as upon their own shores.
- See, pastures and forests in my poems—See, animals, wild and tame—See, beyond the Kansas, countless herds of buffalo, feeding on short curly grass ;  
 See, in my poems, cities, solid, vast, inland, with paved streets, with iron and stone edifices, ceaseless vehicles, and commerce ;  
 See, the many-cylinder'd steam printing-press—See, the electric telegraph, stretching across the Continent, from the Western Sea to Manhattan ;  
 See, through Atlantica's depths, pulses American, Europe reaching—pulses of Europe, duly return'd ;  
 See, the strong and quick locomotive, as it departs, panting, blowing the steam-whistle ;  
 See, ploughmen, ploughing farms—See, miners, digging mines—See, the numberless factories ;  
 See, mechanics, busy at their benches, with tools—See from among them, superior judges, philosophers, Presidents, emerge, drest in working dresses ;  
 See, lounging through the shops and fields of The States, me, well-belov'd, close-held by day and night ;  
 Hear the loud echoes of my songs there! Read the hints come at last.

## 20

<sup>64</sup> O Camerado close !  
O you and me at last—and us two only.

<sup>65</sup> O a word to clear one's path ahead endlessly !  
O something extatic and undemonstrable ! O music  
wild !  
O now I triumph—and you shall also ;  
O hand in hand—O wholesome pleasure—O one more  
desirer and lover !  
O to haste, firm holding—to haste, haste on, with me.

---

## THE SHIP STARTING.

Lo ! THE unbounded sea !  
On its breast a Ship starting, spreading all her sails—  
an ample Ship, carrying even her moonsails ;  
The pennant is flying aloft, as she speeds, she speeds  
so stately—below, emulous waves press forward,  
They surround the Ship, with shining curving motions,  
and foam.



## UNFOLDED OUT OF THE FOLDS.

UNFOLDED out of the folds of the woman, man comes  
unfolded, and is always to come unfolded ;  
Unfolded only out of the superbest woman of the earth,  
is to come the superbest man of the earth ;  
Unfolded out of the friendliest woman, is to come the  
friendliest man ;  
Unfolded only out of the perfect body of a woman, can  
a man be form'd of perfect body ;  
Unfolded only out of the inimitable poem of the wo-  
man, can come the poems of man—(only thence  
have my poems come ;)  
Unfolded out of the strong and arrogant woman I love,  
only thence can appear the strong and arrogant  
man I love ;  
Unfolded by brawny embraces from the well-muscled  
woman I love, only thence come the brawny em-  
braces of the man ;  
Unfolded out of the folds of the woman's brain, come  
all the folds of the man's brain, duly obedient ;  
Unfolded out of the justice of the woman, all justice is  
unfolded ;  
Unfolded out of the sympathy of the woman is all sym-  
pathy :  
A man is a great thing upon the earth, and through  
eternity—but every jot of the greatness of man  
is unfolded out of woman,  
First the man is shaped in the woman, he can then be  
shaped in himself.



## TO YOU.

STRANGER ! if you, passing, meet me, and desire to speak  
to me, why should you not speak to me ?  
And why should I not speak to you ?



# WALT WHITMAN.

1

<sup>1</sup> I CELEBRATE myself ;  
And what I assume you shall assume ;  
For every atom belonging to me, as good belongs to  
you.

<sup>2</sup> I loafe and invite my Soul ;  
I lean and loafe at my ease, observing a spear of sum-  
mer grass.

<sup>3</sup> Houses and rooms are full of perfumes—the shelves  
are crowded with perfumes ;  
I breathe the fragrance myself, and know it and like it ;  
The distillation would intoxicate me also, but I shall  
not let it.

<sup>4</sup> The atmosphere is not a perfume—it has no taste of  
the distillation—it is odorless ;  
It is for my mouth forever—I am in love with it ;  
I will go to the bank by the wood, and become undis-  
guised and naked ;  
I am mad for it to be in contact with me.

2

<sup>5</sup> The smoke of my own breath ;  
Echoes, ripples, buzz'd whispers, love-root, silk-thread,  
crotch and vine ;  
My respiration and inspiration, the beating of my heart,  
the passing of blood and air through my lungs ;

The sniff of green leaves and dry leaves, and of the  
shore, and dark-color'd sea-rocks, and of hay in  
the barn ;

The sound of the belch'd words of my voice, words  
loos'd to the eddies of the wind ;

A few light kisses, a few embraces, a reaching around  
of arms ;

The play of shine and shade on the trees as the supple  
boughs wag ;

The delight alone, or in the rush of the streets, or along  
the fields and hill-sides ;

The feeling of health, the full-noon trill, the song of me  
rising from bed and meeting the sun.

<sup>6</sup> Have you reckon'd a thousand acres much ? have you  
reckon'd the earth much ?

Have you practis'd so long to learn to read ?

Have you felt so proud to get at the meaning of  
poems ?

<sup>7</sup> Stop this day and night with me, and you shall pos-  
sess the origin of all poems ;

You shall possess the good of the earth and sun—  
(there are millions of suns left ;)

You shall no longer take things at second or third  
hand, nor look through the eyes of the dead,  
nor feed on the spectres in books ;

You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take  
things from me :

You shall listen to all sides, and filter them from your-  
self.

### 3

<sup>8</sup> I have heard what the talkers were talking, the talk  
of the beginning and the end ;

But I do not talk of the beginning or the end.

<sup>9</sup> There was never any more inception than there is  
now,

Nor any more youth or age than there is now ;

And will never be any more perfection than there is  
now,  
Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now.

<sup>10</sup> Urge, and urge, and urge ;  
Always the procreant urge of the world.

<sup>11</sup> Out of the dimness opposite equals advance—always  
substance and increase, always sex ;  
Always a knit of identity—always distinction—always a  
breed of life.

<sup>12</sup> To elaborate is no avail—learn'd and unlearn'd feel  
that it is so.

<sup>13</sup> Sure as the most certain sure, plumb in the uprights,  
well entretied, braced in the beams,  
Stout as a horse, affectionate, haughty, electrical,  
I and this mystery, here we stand.

<sup>14</sup> Clear and sweet is my Soul, and clear and sweet is all  
that is not my Soul.

<sup>15</sup> Lack one lacks both, and the unseen is proved by  
the seen,  
Till that becomes unseen, and receives proof in its  
turn.

<sup>16</sup> Showing the best, and dividing it from the worst,  
age vexes age ;  
Knowing the perfect fitness and equanimity of things,  
while they discuss I am silent, and go bathe and  
admire myself.

<sup>17</sup> Welcome is every organ and attribute of me, and of  
any man hearty and clean ;  
Not an inch, nor a particle of an inch, is vile, and none  
shall be less familiar than the rest.

<sup>18</sup> I am satisfied—I see, dance, laugh, sing ;  
As the hugging and loving Bed-fellow sleeps at my side  
    through the night, and withdraws at the peep of  
    the day, with stealthy tread,  
Leaving me baskets cover'd with white towels, swelling  
    the house with their plenty,  
Shall I postpone my acceptation and realization, and  
    scream at my eyes,  
That they turn from gazing after and down the road,  
And forthwith cipher and show me a cent,  
Exactly the contents of one, and exactly the contents of  
    two, and which is ahead ?

## 4

<sup>19</sup> Trippers and askers surround me ;  
People I meet—the effect upon me of my early life, or  
    the ward and city I live in, or the nation,  
The latest dates, discoveries, inventions, societies,  
    authors old and new,  
My dinner, dress, associates, looks, compliments, dues,  
The real or fancied indifference of some man or woman  
    I love,  
The sickness of one of my folks, or of myself, or ill-  
    doing, or loss or lack of money, or depressions  
    or exaltations ;  
Battles, the horrors of fratricidal war, the fever of  
    doubtful news, the fitful events ;  
These come to me days and nights, and go from me  
    again,  
But they are not the Me myself.

<sup>20</sup> Apart from the pulling and hauling stands what I  
    am ;  
Stands amused, complacent, compassionating, idle, uni-  
    tary ;  
Looks down, is erect, or bends an arm on an impalpable  
    certain rest,  
Looking with side-curved head, curious what will come  
    next ;

Both in and out of the game, and watching and wondering at it.

<sup>21</sup> Backward I see in my own days where I sweated  
through fog with linguists and contenders ;  
I have no mockings or arguments—I witness and wait.

## 5

<sup>22</sup> I believe in you, my Soul—the other I am must not  
abase itself to you ;  
And you must not be abased to the other.

<sup>23</sup> Loafe with me on the grass—loose the stop from  
your throat ;  
Not words, not music or rhyme I want—not custom or  
lecture, not even the best ;  
Only the lull I like, the hum of your valved voice.

<sup>24</sup> I mind how once we lay, such a transparent summer  
morning ;  
How you settled your head athwart my hips, and gently  
turn'd over upon me,  
And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged  
your tongue to my bare-stript heart,  
And reach'd till you felt my beard, and reach'd till you  
held my feet.

<sup>25</sup> Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and  
knowledge that pass all the argument of the  
earth ;  
And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my  
own,  
And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my  
own ;  
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers,  
and the women my sisters and lovers ;  
And that a kelson of the creation is love ;  
And limitless are leaves, stiff or drooping in the fields ;  
And brown ants in the little wells beneath them ;  
And mossy scabs of the worm fence, and heap'd stones,  
elder, mullen and poke-weed.



## 6

<sup>26</sup> A child said, *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with full hands ;  
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is, any more than he.

<sup>27</sup> I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.

<sup>28</sup> Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,  
A scented gift and remembrancer, designedly dropt,  
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark, and say, *Whose?*

<sup>29</sup> Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe of the vegetation.

<sup>30</sup> Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic ;  
And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones,  
Growing among black folks as among white ;  
Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the same, I receive them the same.

<sup>31</sup> And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

<sup>32</sup> Tenderly will I use you, curling grass ;  
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men ;  
It may be if I had known them I would have loved them ;  
It may be you are from old people, and from women,  
and from offspring taken soon out of their mothers' laps ;  
And here you are the mothers' laps.

<sup>33</sup> This grass is very dark to be from the white heads of old mothers ;  
Darker than the colorless beards of old men ;  
Dark to come from under the faint red roofs of mouths.



<sup>34</sup> O I perceive after all so many uttering tongues!  
And I perceive they do not come from the roofs of  
mouths for nothing.

<sup>35</sup> I wish I could translate the hints about the dead  
young men and women,  
And the hints about old men and mothers, and the  
offspring taken soon out of their laps.

<sup>36</sup> What do you think has become of the young and  
old men?  
And what do you think has become of the women and  
children?

<sup>37</sup> They are alive and well somewhere;  
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death;  
And if ever there was, it led forward life, and does not  
wait at the end to arrest it,  
And ceas'd the moment life appear'd.

<sup>38</sup> All goes onward and outward—nothing collapses;  
And to die is different from what any one supposed,  
and luckier.

## 7

<sup>39</sup> Has any one supposed it lucky to be born?  
I hasten to inform him or her, it is just as lucky to die,  
and I know it.

<sup>40</sup> I pass death with the dying, and birth with the new-  
wash'd babe, and am not contain'd between my  
hat and boots;  
And peruse manifold objects, no two alike, and every  
one good;  
The earth good, and the stars good, and their adjuncts  
all good.

<sup>41</sup> I am not an earth, nor an adjunct of an earth;  
I am the mate and companion of people, all just as  
immortal and fathomless as myself;  
(They do not know how immortal, but I know.)

<sup>42</sup> Every kind for itself and its own—for me mine, male  
and female ;  
For me those that have been boys, and that love  
women ;  
For me the man that is proud, and feels how it stings  
to be slighted ;  
For me the sweet-heart and the old maid—for me  
mothers, and the mothers of mothers ;  
For me lips that have smiled, eyes that have shed tears ;  
For me children, and the begetters of children.

<sup>43</sup> Undrape! you are not guilty to me, nor stale, nor  
discarded ;  
I see through the broadcloth and gingham, whether  
or no ;  
And am around, tenacious, acquisitive, tireless, and  
cannot be shaken away.

## 8

<sup>44</sup> The little one sleeps in its cradle ;  
I lift the gauze, and look a long time, and silently  
brush away flies with my hand.

<sup>45</sup> The youngster and the red-faced girl turn aside up  
the bushy hill ;  
I peeringly view them from the top.

<sup>46</sup> The suicide sprawls on the bloody floor of the bed-  
room ;  
I witness the corpse with its dabbled hair—I note  
where the pistol has fallen.

<sup>47</sup> The blab of the pave, the tires of carts, sluff of boot-  
soles, talk of the promenaders ;  
The heavy omnibus, the driver with his interrogating  
thumb, the clank of the shod horses on the  
granite floor ;  
The snow-sleighs, the clinking, shouted jokes, pelts of  
snow-balls ;

The hurrahs for popular favorites, the fury of rous'd  
     mobs ;  
 The flap of the curtain'd litter, a sick man inside, borne  
     to the hospital ;  
 The meeting of enemies, the sudden oath, the blows  
     and fall ;  
 The excited crowd, the policeman with his star, quickly  
     working his passage to the centre of the crowd ;  
 The impassive stones that receive and return so many  
     echoes ;  
 What groans of over-fed or half-starv'd who fall sun-  
     struck, or in fits ;  
 What exclamations of women taken suddenly, who  
     hurry home and give birth to babes ;  
 What living and buried speech is always vibrating  
     here—what howls restrain'd by decorum ;  
 Arrests of criminals, slights, adulterous offers made,  
     acceptances, rejections with convex lips ;  
 I mind them or the show or resonance of them—I  
     come, and I depart.

## 9

<sup>48</sup> The big doors of the country barn stand open and  
     ready ;  
 The dried grass of the harvest-time loads the slow-  
     drawn wagon ;  
 The clear light plays on the brown gray and green  
     intertinged ;  
 The armfuls are pack'd to the sagging mow.

<sup>49</sup> I am there—I help—I came stretch'd atop of the  
     load ;  
 I felt its soft jolts—one leg reclined on the other ;  
 I jump from the cross-beams, and seize the clover and  
     timothy,  
 And roll head over heels, and tangle my hair full of  
     wisps.

## 10

<sup>50</sup> Alone, far in the wilds and mountains, I hunt,

Wandering, amazed at my own lightness and glee ;  
In the late afternoon choosing a safe spot to pass the  
night,  
Kindling a fire and broiling the fresh-kill'd game ;  
Falling asleep on the gather'd leaves, with my dog and  
gun by my side.

<sup>51</sup> The Yankee clipper is under her sky-sails—she cuts  
the sparkle and scud ;  
My eyes settle the land—I bend at her prow, or shout  
joyously from the deck.

<sup>52</sup> The boatmen and clam-diggers arose early and stopt  
for me ;  
I tuck'd my trowser-ends in my boots, and went and  
had a good time :  
(You should have been with us that day round the  
chowder-kettle.)

<sup>53</sup> I saw the marriage of the trapper in the open air in  
the far west—the bride was a red girl ;  
Her father and his friends sat near, cross-legged and  
dumbly smoking—they had moccasins to their  
feet, and large thick blankets hanging from their  
shoulders ;  
On a bank lounged the trapper—he was drest mostly in  
skins—his luxuriant beard and curls protected  
his neck—he held his bride by the hand ;  
She had long eyelashes—her head was bare—her coarse  
straight locks descended upon her voluptuous  
limbs and reach'd to her feet.

<sup>54</sup> The runaway slave came to my house and stopt out-  
side ;  
I heard his motions crackling the twigs of the wood-  
pile ;  
Through the swung half-door of the kitchen I saw him  
limpsy and weak,  
And went where he sat on a log, and led him in and  
assured him,

And brought water, and fill'd a tub for his sweated  
 body and bruise'd feet,  
 And gave him a room that enter'd from my own, and  
 gave him some coarse clean clothes,  
 And remember perfectly well his revolving eyes and his  
 awkwardness,  
 And remember putting plasters on the galls of his neck  
 and ankles ;  
 He staid with me a week before he was recuperated and  
 pass'd north ;  
 (I had him sit next me at table—my fire-lock lean'd in  
 the corner.)

## 11

<sup>55</sup> Twenty-eight young men bathe by the shore ;  
 Twenty-eight young men, and all so friendly :  
 Twenty-eight years of womanly life, and all so lone-  
 some.

<sup>56</sup> She owns the fine house by the rise of the bank ;  
 She hides, handsome and richly drest, aft the blinds of  
 the window.

<sup>57</sup> Which of the young men does she like the best ?  
 Ah, the homeliest of them is beautiful to her.

<sup>58</sup> Where are you off to, lady ? for I see you ;  
 You splash in the water there, yet stay stock still in  
 your room.

<sup>59</sup> Dancing and laughing along the beach came the  
 twenty-ninth bather ;  
 The rest did not see her, but she saw them and loved  
 them.

<sup>60</sup> The beards of the young men glisten'd with wet, it  
 ran from their long hair :  
 Little streams pass'd all over their bodies.

<sup>61</sup> An unseen hand also pass'd over their bodies ;  
 It descended tremblingly from their temples and ribs.



<sup>62</sup> The young men float on their backs—their white bellies bulge to the sun—they do not ask who seizes fast to them ;  
They do not know who puffs and declines with pendant and bending arch ;  
They do not think whom they souse with spray.

## 12

<sup>63</sup> The butcher-boy puts off his killing clothes, or sharpens his knife at the stall in the market ;  
I loiter, enjoying his repartee, and his shuffle and break-down.

<sup>64</sup> Blacksmiths with grimed and hairy chests environ the anvil ;  
Each has his main-sledge—they are all out—(there is a great heat in the fire.)

<sup>65</sup> From the cinder-strew'd threshold I follow their movements ;  
The lithe sheer of their waists plays even with their massive arms ;  
Over-hand the hammers swing—over-hand so slow—over-hand so sure :  
They do not hasten—each man hits in his place.

## 13

<sup>66</sup> The negro holds firmly the reins of his four horses—the block swags underneath on its tied-over chain ;  
The negro that drives the dray of the stone-yard—steady and tall he stands, pois'd on one leg on the string-piece ;  
His blue shirt exposes his ample neck and breast, and loosens over his hip-band ;  
His glance is calm and commanding—he tosses the slouch of his hat away from his forehead ;  
The sun falls on his crispy hair and moustache—falls on the black of his polish'd and perfect limbs.



<sup>67</sup> I behold the picturesque giant, and love him—and I  
do not stop there ;  
I go with the team also.

<sup>68</sup> In me the caresser of life wherever moving—back-  
ward as well as forward slueing ;  
To niches aside and junior bending.

<sup>69</sup> Oxen that rattle the yoke and chain, or halt in the  
leafy shade! what is that you express in your  
eyes?  
It seems to me more than all the print I have read in  
my life.

<sup>70</sup> My tread scares the wood-drake and wood-duck, on  
my distant and day-long ramble ;  
They rise together—they slowly circle around.

<sup>71</sup> I believe in those wing'd purposes,  
And acknowledge red, yellow, white, playing within me,  
And consider green and violet, and the tufted crown,  
intentional ;  
And do not call the tortoise unworthy because she is  
not something else ;  
And the jay in the woods never studied the gamut, yet  
trills pretty well to me ;  
And the look of the bay mare shames silliness out of  
me.

## 14

<sup>72</sup> The wild gander leads his flock through the cool  
night ;  
*Ya-honk!* he says, and sounds it down to me like an  
invitation ;  
(The pert may suppose it meaningless, but I listen  
close ;  
I find its purpose and place up there toward the wintry  
sky.)

<sup>73</sup> The sharp-hoof'd moose of the north, the cat on the  
house-sill, the chickadee, the prairie-dog,  
The litter of the grunting sow as they tug at her teats,  
The brood of the turkey-hen, and she with her half-  
spread wings ;  
I see in them and myself the same old law.

<sup>74</sup> The press of my foot to the earth springs a hundred  
affections ;  
They scorn the best I can do to relate them.

<sup>75</sup> I am enamour'd of growing out-doors,  
Of men that live among cattle, or taste of the ocean or  
woods,  
Of the builders and steerers of ships, and the wielders  
of axes and mauls, and the drivers of horses ;  
I can eat and sleep with them week in and week out.

<sup>76</sup> What is commonest, cheapest, nearest, easiest, is Me ;  
Me going in for my chances, spending for vast returns ;  
Adorning myself to bestow myself on the first that will  
take me ;  
Not asking the sky to come down to my good will ;  
Scattering it freely forever.

## 15

<sup>77</sup> The pure contralto sings in the organ loft ;  
The carpenter dresses his plank—the tongue of his  
foreplane whistles its wild ascending lisp ;  
The married and unmarried children ride home to their  
Thanksgiving dinner ;  
The pilot seizes the king-pin—he heaves down with a  
strong arm ;  
The mate stands braced in the whale-boat—lance and  
harpoon are ready ;  
The duck-shooter walks by silent and cautious stretches ;  
The deacons are ordain'd with cross'd hands at the  
altar ;  
The spinning-girl retreats and advances to the hum of  
the big wheel ;

The farmer stops by the bars, as he walks on a First-day loafe, and looks at the oats and rye ;  
The lunatic is carried at last to the asylum, a confirm'd case,  
(He will never sleep any more as he did in the cot in his mother's bed-room ;)   
The jour printer with gray head and gaunt jaws works at his case,  
He turns his quid of tobacco, while his eyes blurr with the manuscript ;  
The malform'd limbs are tied to the surgeon's table,  
What is removed drops horribly in a pail ;  
The quadroon girl is sold at the auction-stand—the drunkard nods by the bar-room stove ;  
The machinist rolls up his sleeves—the policeman travels his beat—the gate-keeper marks who pass ;  
The young fellow drives the express-wagon—(I love him, though I do not know him ;)   
The half-breed straps on his light boots to compete in the race ;  
The western turkey-shooting draws old and young—some lean on their rifles, some sit on logs,  
Out from the crowd steps the marksman, takes his position, levels his piece ;  
The groups of newly-come immigrants cover the wharf or levee ;  
As the woolly-pates hoe in the sugar-field, the overseer views them from his saddle ;  
The bugle calls in the ball-room, the gentlemen run for their partners, the dancers bow to each other ;  
The youth lies awake in the cedar-roof'd garret, and harks to the musical rain ;  
The Wolverine sets traps on the creek that helps fill the Huron ;  
The squaw, wrapt in her yellow-hemm'd cloth, is offering moccasins and bead-bags for sale ;  
The connoisseur peers along the exhibition-gallery with half-shut eyes bent sideways ;  
As the deck-hands make fast the steamboat, the plank is thrown for the shore-going passengers ;

The young sister holds out the skein, while the elder sister winds it off in a ball, and stops now and then for the knots ;

The one-year wife is recovering and happy, having a week ago borne her first child ;

The clean-hair'd Yankee girl works with her sewing-machine, or in the factory or mill ;

The nine months' gone is in the parturition chamber, her faintness and pains are advancing ;

The paving-man leans on his two-handed rammer—the reporter's lead flies swiftly over the note-book—the sign-painter is lettering with red and gold ;

The canal boy trots on the tow-path—the book-keeper counts at his desk—the shoemaker waxes his thread ;

The conductor beats time for the band, and all the performers follow him ;

The child is baptized—the convert is making his first professions ;

The regatta is spread on the bay—the race is begun—how the white sails sparkle !

The drover, watching his drove, sings out to them that would stray ;

The pedler sweats with his pack on his back, (the purchaser higgling about the odd cent ;) )

The camera and plate are prepared, the lady must sit for her daguerreotype ;

The bride unrumple her white dress, the minute-hand of the clock moves slowly ;

The opium-eater reclines with rigid head and just-open'd lips ;

The prostitute draggles her shawl, her bonnet bobs on her tipsy and pimpled neck ;

The crowd laugh at her blackguard oaths, the men jeer and wink to each other ;

(Miserable ! I do not laugh at your oaths, nor jeer you ;) )

The President, holding a cabinet council, is surrounded by the Great Secretaries ;

On the piazza walk three matrons stately and friendly with twined arms ;

The crew of the fish-smack pack repeated layers of halibut in the hold ;  
The Missourian crosses the plains, toting his wares and his cattle ;  
As the fare-collector goes through the train, he gives notice by the jingling of loose change ;  
The floor-men are laying the floor—the tanners are tanning the roof—the masons are calling for mortar ;  
In single file, each shouldering his hod, pass onward the laborers ;  
Seasons pursuing each other, the indescribable crowd is gather'd—it is the Fourth of Seventh-month—  
(What salutes of cannon and small arms !)  
Seasons pursuing each other, the plougher ploughs, the mower mows, and the winter-grain falls in the ground ;  
Off on the lakes the pike-fisher watches and waits by the hole in the frozen surface ;  
The stumps stand thick round the clearing, the squatter strikes deep with his axe ;  
Flatboatmen make fast, towards dusk, near the cotton-wood or pekan-trees ;  
Coon-seekers go through the regions of the Red river, or through those drain'd by the Tennessee, or through those of the Arkansaw ;  
Torches shine in the dark that hangs on the Chattahoochee or Altamahaw ;  
Patriarchs sit at supper with sons and grandsons and great-grandsons around them ;  
In walls of adobie, in canvas tents, rest hunters and trappers after their day's sport ;  
The city sleeps, and the country sleeps ;  
The living sleep for their time, the dead sleep for their time ;  
The old husband sleeps by his wife, and the young husband sleeps by his wife ;  
And these one and all tend inward to me, and I tend outward to them ;  
And such as it is to be of these, more or less, I am.



## 16

<sup>78</sup> I am of old and young, of the foolish as much as the wise ;

Regardless of others, ever regardful of others,  
Maternal as well as paternal, a child as well as a man,  
Stuff'd with the stuff that is coarse, and stuff'd with the  
stuff that is fine ;

One of the Great Nation, the nation of many nations,  
the smallest the same, and the largest the same ;

A southerner soon as a northerner—a planter non-  
chalant and hospitable, down by the Oconee I  
live ;

A Yankee, bound my own way, ready for trade, my  
joints the limberest joints on earth, and the stern-  
est joints on earth ;

A Kentuckian, walking the vale of the Elkhorn, in my  
deer-skin leggings—a Louisianian or Georgian ;

A boatman over lakes or bays, or along coasts—a  
Hoosier, Badger, Buckeye ;

At home on Kanadian snow-shoes, or up in the bush, or  
with fishermen off Newfoundland ;

At home in the fleet of ice-boats, sailing with the rest  
and tacking ;

At home on the hills of Vermont, or in the woods of  
Maine, or the Texan ranch ;

Comrade of Californians—comrade of free north-west-  
erners, (loving their big proportions ;)

Comrade of raftsmen and coalmen—comrade of all who  
shake hands and welcome to drink and meat ;

A learner with the simplest, a teacher of the thought-  
fullest ;

A novice beginning, yet experient of myriads of sea-  
sons ;

Of every hue and caste am I, of every rank and reli-  
gion ;

A farmer, mechanic, artist, gentleman, sailor, quaker ;

A prisoner, fancy-man, rowdy, lawyer, physician, priest.

<sup>79</sup> I resist anything better than my own diversity ;



I breathe the air, but leave plenty after me,  
And am not stuck up, and am in my place.

<sup>80</sup> (The moth and the fish-eggs are in their place ;  
The suns I see, and the suns I cannot see, are in their  
place ;  
The palpable is in its place, and the impalpable is in its  
place.)

## 17

<sup>81</sup> These are the thoughts of all men in all ages and  
lands—they are not original with me ;  
If they are not yours as much as mine, they are nothing,  
or next to nothing ;  
If they are not the riddle, and the untying of the riddle,  
they are nothing ;  
If they are not just as close as they are distant, they are  
nothing.

<sup>82</sup> This is the grass that grows wherever the land is, and  
the water is ;  
This is the common air that bathes the globe.

## 18

<sup>83</sup> With music strong I come—with my cornets and my  
drums,  
I play not marches for accepted victors only—I play  
great marches for conquer'd and slain persons.

<sup>84</sup> Have you heard that it was good to gain the day ?  
I also say it is good to fall—battles are lost in the same  
spirit in which they are won.

<sup>85</sup> I beat and pound for the dead ;  
I blow through my embouchures my loudest and gayest  
for them.

<sup>86</sup> Vivas to those who have fail'd !  
And to those whose war-vessels sank in the sea !  
And to those themselves who sank in the sea !

- And to all generals that lost engagements! and all overcome heroes!  
 And the numberless unknown heroes, equal to the greatest heroes known.

## 19

- <sup>87</sup> This is the meal equally set—this is the meat for natural hunger;  
 It is for the wicked just the same as the righteous—I make appointments with all;  
 I will not have a single person slighted or left away;  
 The kept-woman, sponger, thief, are hereby invited;  
 The heavy-lipp'd slave is invited—the venerealee is invited:  
 There shall be no difference between them and the rest.
- <sup>88</sup> This is the press of a bashful hand—this is the float and odor of hair;  
 This is the touch of my lips to yours—this is the murmur of yearning;  
 This is the far-off depth and height reflecting my own face;  
 This is the thoughtful merge of myself, and the outlet again.
- <sup>89</sup> Do you guess I have some intricate purpose?  
 Well, I have—for the Fourth-month showers have, and the mica on the side of a rock has.

- <sup>90</sup> Do you take it I would astonish?  
 Does the daylight astonish? Does the early redstart, twittering through the woods?  
 Do I astonish more than they?

- <sup>91</sup> This hour I tell things in confidence;  
 I might not tell everybody, but I will tell you.

## 20

- <sup>92</sup> Who goes there? hankering, gross, mystical, nude;  
 How is it I extract strength from the beef I eat?

<sup>93</sup> What is a man, anyhow? What am I? What are you?

<sup>94</sup> All I mark as my own, you shall offset it with your own;  
Else it were time lost listening to me.

<sup>95</sup> I do not snivel that snivel the world over,  
That months are vacuums, and the ground but wallow  
and filth;  
That life is a suck and a sell, and nothing remains at  
the end but threadbare crape, and tears.

<sup>96</sup> Whimpering and truckling fold with powders for  
invalids—conformity goes to the fourth-remov'd;  
I wear my hat as I please, indoors or out.

<sup>97</sup> Why should I pray? Why should I venerate and be  
ceremonious?

<sup>98</sup> Having pried through the strata, analyzed to a hair,  
counsell'd with doctors, and calculated close,  
I find no sweeter fat than sticks to my own bones.

<sup>99</sup> In all people I see myself—none more, and not one a  
barley-corn less;  
And the good or bad I say of myself, I say of them.

<sup>100</sup> And I know I am solid and sound;  
To me the converging objects of the universe perpetu-  
ally flow;  
All are written to me, and I must get what the writing  
means.

<sup>101</sup> I know I am deathless;  
I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by the car-  
penter's compass;  
I know I shall not pass like a child's carlacue cut with  
a burnt stick at night.

<sup>102</sup> I know I am august;

I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be  
understood ;

I see that the elementary laws never apologize ;  
(I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I plant  
my house by, after all.)

<sup>103</sup> I exist as I am—that is enough ;  
If no other in the world be aware, I sit content ;  
And if each and all be aware, I sit content.

<sup>104</sup> One world is aware, and by far the largest to me,  
and that is myself ;  
And whether I come to my own to-day, or in ten  
thousand or ten million years,  
I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness  
I can wait.

<sup>105</sup> My foothold is tenon'd and mortis'd in granite ;  
I laugh at what you call dissolution ;  
And I know the amplitude of time.

## 21

<sup>106</sup> I am the poet of the Body ;  
And I am the poet of the Soul.

<sup>107</sup> The pleasures of heaven are with me, and the pains  
of hell are with me ;  
The first I graft and increase upon myself—the latter I  
translate into a new tongue.

<sup>108</sup> I am the poet of the woman the same as the man ;  
And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man ;  
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of  
men.

<sup>109</sup> I chant the chant of dilation or pride ;  
We have had ducking and deprecating about enough ;  
I show that size is only development.

<sup>110</sup> Have you outstript the rest? Are you the Presi-  
dent?

It is a trifle—they will more than arrive there, every one, and still pass on.

<sup>111</sup> I am he that walks with the tender and growing night ;  
I call to the earth and sea, half-held by the night.

<sup>112</sup> Press close, bare-bosom'd night ! Press close, magnetic, nourishing night !  
Night of south winds ! night of the large few stars !  
Still, nodding night ! mad, naked, summer night.

<sup>113</sup> Smile, O voluptuous, cool-breath'd earth !  
Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees ;  
Earth of departed sunset ! earth of the mountains, misty-topt !  
Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon, just tinged with blue !  
Earth of shine and dark, mottling the tide of the river !  
Earth of the limpid gray of clouds, brighter and clearer for my sake !  
Far-swooping elbow'd earth ! rich, apple-blossom'd earth !  
Smile, for your lover comes !

<sup>114</sup> Prodigal, you have given me love ! Therefore I to you give love !  
O unspeakable, passionate love !

## 22

<sup>115</sup> You sea ! I resign myself to you also—I guess what you mean ;  
I behold from the beach your crooked inviting fingers ;  
I believe you refuse to go back without feeling of me ;  
We must have a turn together—I undress—hurry me out of sight of the land ;  
Cushion me soft, rock me in billowy drowse ;  
Dash me with amorous wet—I can repay you.

<sup>116</sup> Sea of stretch'd ground-swells !



Sea breathing broad and convulsive breaths!  
 Sea of the brine of life! sea of unshovell'd yet always-  
     ready graves!  
 Howler and scooper of storms! capricious and dainty  
     sea!  
 I am integral with you—I too am of one phase, and of  
     all phases.

<sup>117</sup> Partaker of influx and efflux I—extoller of hate and  
     conciliation;  
 Extoller of amies, and those that sleep in each others'  
     arms.

<sup>118</sup> I am he attesting sympathy;  
 (Shall I make my list of things in the house, and skip  
     the house that supports them?)

<sup>119</sup> I am not the poet of goodness only—I do not decline  
     to be the poet of wickedness also.

<sup>120</sup> Washes and razors for foofoos—for me freckles and  
     a bristling beard.

<sup>121</sup> What blurt is this about virtue and about vice?  
 Evil propels me, and reform of evil propels me—I stand  
     indifferent;  
 My gait is no fault-finder's or rejecter's gait;  
 I moisten the roots of all that has grown.

<sup>122</sup> Did you fear some scrofula out of the unflagging  
     pregnancy?  
 Did you guess the celestial laws are yet to be work'd  
     over and rectified?

<sup>123</sup> I find one side a balance, and the antipodal side a  
     balance;  
 Soft doctrine as steady help as stable doctrine;  
 Thoughts and deeds of the present, our rouse and early  
     start.



<sup>124</sup> This minute that comes to me over the past decilions,  
There is no better than it and now.

<sup>125</sup> What behaved well in the past, or behaves well to-day, is not such a wonder ;  
The wonder is, always and always, how there can be a mean man or an infidel.

## 23

<sup>126</sup> Endless unfolding of words of ages !  
And mine a word of the modern—the word En-Masse.

<sup>127</sup> A word of the faith that never balks ;  
Here or henceforward, it is all the same to me—I accept Time, absolutely.

<sup>128</sup> It alone is without flaw—it rounds and completes all ;  
That mystic, baffling wonder I love, alone completes all.

<sup>129</sup> I accept reality, and dare not question it ;  
Materialism first and last imbuing.

<sup>130</sup> Hurrah for positive science ! long live exact demonstration !  
Fetch stonecrop, mixt with cedar and branches of lilac ;  
This is the lexicographer—this the chemist—this made a grammar of the old cartouches ;  
These mariners put the ship through dangerous unknown seas ;  
This is the geologist—this works with the scalpel—and this is a mathematician.

<sup>131</sup> Gentlemen ! to you the first honors always :  
Your facts are useful and real—and yet they are not my dwelling ;  
(I but enter by them to an area of my dwelling.)

<sup>132</sup> Less the reminders of properties told, my words ;  
 And more the reminders, they, of life untold, and of  
 freedom and extrication,  
 And make short account of neuters and geldings, and  
 favor men and women fully equipt,  
 And beat the gong of revolt, and stop with fugitives,  
 and them that plot and conspire.

## 24

<sup>133</sup> Walt Whitman am I, a Kosmos, of mighty Manhat-  
 tan the son,  
 Turbulent, fleshy and sensual, eating, drinking and  
 breeding ;  
 No sentimentalist—no stander above men and women,  
 or apart from them ;  
 No more modest than immodest.

<sup>134</sup> Unscrew the locks from the doors!  
 Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!

<sup>135</sup> Whoever degrades another degrades me ;  
 And whatever is done or said returns at last to me.

<sup>136</sup> Through me the afflatus surging and surging—  
 through me the current and index.

<sup>137</sup> I speak the pass-word primeval—I give the sign of  
 democracy ;  
 By God! I will accept nothing which all cannot have  
 their counterpart of on the same terms.

<sup>138</sup> Through me many long dumb voices ;  
 Voices of the interminable generations of slaves ;  
 Voices of prostitutes, and of deform'd persons ;  
 Voices of the diseas'd and despairing, and of thieves  
 and dwarfs ;  
 Voices of cycles of preparation and accretion,  
 And of the threads that connect the stars—and of  
 wombs, and of the father-stuff,  
 And of the rights of them the others are down upon ;

Of the trivial, flat, foolish, despised,  
Fog in the air, beetles rolling balls of dung.

<sup>139</sup> Through me forbidden voices ;  
Voices of sexes and lusts—voices veil'd, and I remove  
the veil ;  
Voices indecent, by me clarified and transfigur'd.

<sup>140</sup> I do not press my fingers across my mouth ;  
I keep as delicate around the bowels as around the  
head and heart ;  
Copulation is no more rank to me than death is.

<sup>141</sup> I believe in the flesh and the appetites ;  
Seeing, hearing, feeling, are miracles, and each part  
and tag of me is a miracle.

<sup>142</sup> Divine am I inside and out, and I make holy what-  
ever I touch or am touch'd from ;  
The scent of these arm-pits, aroma finer than prayer ;  
This head more than churches, bibles, and all the  
creeds.

<sup>143</sup> If I worship one thing more than another, it shall  
be the spread of my own body, or any part of it.

<sup>144</sup> Translucent mould of me, it shall be you !  
Shaded ledges and rests, it shall be you !  
Firm masculine colter, it shall be you.

<sup>145</sup> Whatever goes to the tilth of me, it shall be you !  
You my rich blood ! Your milky stream, pale strippings  
of my life.

<sup>146</sup> Breast that presses against other breasts, it shall be  
you !  
My brain, it shall be your occult convolutions.

<sup>147</sup> Root of wash'd sweet flag ! timorous pond-snipe !  
nest of guarded duplicate eggs ! it shall be you !

Mix'd tussled hay of head, beard, brawn, it shall be  
you!

Trickling sap of maple! fibre of manly wheat! it shall  
be you!

<sup>148</sup> Sun so generous, it shall be you!

Vapors lighting and shading my face, it shall be you!

You sweaty brooks and dews, it shall be you!

Winds whose soft-tickling genitals rub against me, it  
shall be you!

Broad, muscular fields! branches of live oak! loving  
lounger in my winding paths! it shall be you!

Hands I have taken—face I have kiss'd—mortal I have  
ever touch'd! it shall be you.

<sup>149</sup> I dote on myself—there is that lot of me, and all so  
luscious;

Each moment, and whatever happens, thrills me with  
joy.

<sup>150</sup> O I am wonderful!

I cannot tell how my ankles bend, nor whence the  
cause of my faintest wish;

Nor the cause of the friendship I emit, nor the cause  
of the friendship I take again.

<sup>151</sup> That I walk up my stoop! I pause to consider if it  
really be;

A morning-glory at my window satisfies me more than  
the metaphysics of books.

<sup>152</sup> To behold the day-break!

The little light fades the immense and diaphanous  
shadows;

The air tastes good to my palate.

<sup>153</sup> Hefts of the moving world, at innocent gambols,  
silently rising, freshly exuding,

Scooting obliquely high and low.

<sup>154</sup> Something I cannot see puts upward libidinous  
prongs;  
Seas of bright juice suffuse heaven.

<sup>155</sup> The earth by the sky staid with—the daily close of  
their junction;  
The heav'd challenge from the east that moment over  
my head;  
The mocking taunt, See then whether you shall be  
master!

## 25

<sup>156</sup> Dazzling and tremendous, how quick the sun-rise  
would kill me,  
If I could not now and always send sun-rise out of  
me.

<sup>157</sup> We also ascend, dazzling and tremendous as the  
sun;  
We found our own, O my Soul, in the calm and cool  
of the daybreak.

<sup>158</sup> My voice goes after what my eyes cannot reach;  
With the twirl of my tongue I encompass worlds, and  
volumes of worlds.

<sup>159</sup> Speech is the twin of my vision—it is unequal to  
measure itself;  
It provokes me forever;  
It says sarcastically, *Walt, you contain enough—why  
don't you let it out, then?*

<sup>160</sup> Come now, I will not be tantalized—you conceive  
too much of articulation.

<sup>161</sup> Do you not know, O speech, how the buds beneath  
you are folded?  
Waiting in gloom, protected by frost;  
The dirt receding before my prophetic screams;  
I underlying causes, to balance them at last;



My knowledge my live parts—it keeping tally with the  
meaning of things.

HAPPINESS—which, whoever hears me, let him or her set  
out in search of this day.

<sup>162</sup> My final merit I refuse you—I refuse putting from  
me what I really am ;

Encompass worlds, but never try to encompass me ;

I crowd your sleekest and best by simply looking to-  
ward you.

<sup>163</sup> Writing and talk do not prove me ;

I carry the plenum of proof, and everything else, in my  
face ;

With the hush of my lips I wholly confound the skept-  
tic.

## 26

<sup>164</sup> I think I will do nothing now but listen,

To accrue what I hear into myself—to let sounds con-  
tribute toward me.

<sup>165</sup> I hear bravuras of birds, bustle of growing wheat,  
gossip of flames, clack of sticks cooking my  
meals ;

I hear the sound I love, the sound of the human  
voice ;

I hear all sounds running together, combined, fused or  
following ;

Sounds of the city, and sounds out of the city—sounds  
of the day and night ;

Talkative young ones to those that like them—the loud  
laugh of work-people at their meals ;

The angry base of disjointed friendship—the faint tones  
of the sick ;

The judge with hands tight to the desk, his pallid lips  
pronouncing a death-sentence ;

The heave'e'yo of stevedores unlading ships by the  
wharves—the refrain of the anchor-lifters ;



The ring of alarm-bells—the cry of fire—the whirr of  
swift-streaking engines and hose-carts, with pre-  
monitory tinkles, and color'd lights ;  
The steam-whistle—the solid roll of the train of ap-  
proaching cars ;  
The slow-march play'd at the head of the association,  
marching two and two ;  
(They go to guard some corpse—the flag-tops are  
draped with black muslin.)

<sup>166</sup> I hear the violoncello, ('tis the young man's heart's  
complaint ;)  
I hear the key'd cornet—it glides quickly in through  
my ears ;  
It shakes mad-sweet pangs through my belly and  
breast.

<sup>167</sup> I hear the chorus—it is a grand opera ;  
Ah, this indeed is music ! This suits me.

<sup>168</sup> A tenor large and fresh as the creation fills me ;  
The orbic flex of his mouth is pouring and filling me  
full.

<sup>169</sup> I hear the train'd soprano—(what work, with hers,  
is this ?)  
The orchestra whirls me wider than Uranus flies ;  
It wrenches such ardors from me, I did not know I  
possess'd them ;  
It sails me—I dab with bare feet—they are lick'd by  
the indolent waves ;  
I am exposed, cut by bitter and angry hail—I lose my  
breath,  
Steep'd amid honey'd morphine, my windpipe throt-  
tled in fakes of death ;  
At length let up again to feel the puzzle of puzzles,  
And that we call BEING.

## 27

<sup>170</sup> To be, in any form--what is that?  
 (Round and round we go, all of us, and ever come back  
     thither ;)  
 If nothing lay more develop'd, the quahaug in its cal-  
     lous shell were enough.

<sup>171</sup> Mine is no callous shell ;  
 I have instant conductors all over me, whether I pass  
     or stop ;  
 They seize every object and lead it harmlessly through  
     me.

<sup>172</sup> I merely stir, press, feel with my fingers, and am  
     happy ;  
 To touch my person to some one else's is about as much  
     as I can stand.

## 28

<sup>173</sup> Is this then a touch? quivering me to a new iden-  
     tity,  
 Flames and ether making a rush for my veins,  
 Treacherous tip of me reaching and crowding to help  
     them,  
 My flesh and blood playing out lightning to strike what  
     is hardly different from myself ;  
 On all sides prurient provokers stiffening my limbs,  
 Straining the udder of my heart for its withheld drip,  
 Behaving licentious toward me, taking no denial,  
 Depriving me of my best, as for a purpose,  
 Unbuttoning my clothes, holding me by the bare waist,  
 Deluding my confusion with the calm of the sunlight  
     and pasture-fields,  
 Immodestly sliding the fellow-senses away,  
 They bribed to swap off with touch, and go and graze  
     at the edges of me ;  
 No consideration, no regard for my draining strength  
     or my anger ;  
 Fetching the rest of the herd around to enjoy them a  
     while,

Then all uniting to stand on a headland and worry  
me.

<sup>174</sup> The sentries desert every other part of me ;  
They have left me helpless to a red marauder ;  
They all come to the headland, to witness and assist  
against me.

<sup>175</sup> I am given up by traitors ;  
I talk wildly—I have lost my wits—I and nobody else  
am the greatest traitor ;  
I went myself first to the headland—my own hands carried me there.

<sup>176</sup> You villain touch ! what are you doing ? My breath  
is tight in its throat ;  
Unclench your floodgates ! you are too much for me.

## 29

<sup>177</sup> Blind, loving, wrestling touch ! sheath'd, hooded,  
sharp-tooth'd touch !  
Did it make you ache so, leaving me ?

<sup>178</sup> Parting, track'd by arriving—perpetual payment of  
perpetual loan ;  
Rich, showering rain, and recompense richer afterward.

<sup>179</sup> Sprouts take and accumulate—stand by the curb  
prolific and vital :  
Landscapes, projected, masculine, full-sized and golden.

## 30

<sup>180</sup> All truths wait in all things ;  
They neither hasten their own delivery, nor resist it ;  
They do not need the obstetric forceps of the surgeon ;  
The insignificant is as big to me as any ;  
(What is less or more than a touch ?)

<sup>181</sup> Logic and sermons never convince ;  
The damp of the night drives deeper into my soul.

<sup>182</sup> Only what proves itself to every man and woman is  
    . so ;  
Only what nobody denies is so.

<sup>183</sup> A minute and a drop of me settle my brain ;  
I believe the soggy clods shall become lovers and  
    lamps,  
And a compend of compends is the meat of a man or  
    woman,  
And a summit and flower there is the feeling they have  
    for each other,  
And they are to branch boundlessly out of that lesson  
    until it becomes omnific,  
And until every one shall delight us, and we them.

## 31

<sup>184</sup> I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-  
    work of the stars,  
And the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand,  
    and the egg of the wren,  
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'œuvre for the highest,  
And the running blackberry would adorn the parlors of  
    heaven,  
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all  
    machinery,  
And the cow crunching with depress'd head surpasses  
    any statue,  
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of  
    infidels,  
And I could come every afternoon of my life to look at  
    the farmer's girl boiling her iron tea-kettle and  
    baking short-cake.

<sup>185</sup> I find I incorporate gneiss, coal, long-threaded moss,  
    fruits, grains, esculent roots,  
And am stucco'd with quadrupeds and birds all over,

And have distanced what is behind me for good reasons,  
And call anything close again, when I desire it.

<sup>186</sup> In vain the speeding or shyness ;  
In vain the plutonic rocks send their old heat against  
my approach ;  
In vain the mastodon retreats beneath its own powder'd  
bones ;  
In vain objects stand leagues off, and assume manifold  
shapes ;  
In vain the ocean settling in hollows, and the great  
monsters lying low ;  
In vain the buzzard houses herself with the sky ;  
In vain the snake slides through the creepers and logs ;  
In vain the elk takes to the inner passes of the woods ;  
In vain the razor-bill'd auk sails far north to Labrador ;  
I follow quickly, I ascend to the nest in the fissure of  
the cliff.

## 32

<sup>187</sup> I think I could turn and live with animals, they are  
so placid and self-contain'd ;  
I stand and look at them long and long.

<sup>188</sup> They do not sweat and whine about their condition ;  
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their  
sins ;  
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God ;  
Not one is dissatisfied—not one is demented with the  
mania of owning things ;  
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived  
thousands of years ago ;  
Not one is respectable or industrious over the whole  
earth.

<sup>189</sup> So they show their relations to me, and I accept  
them ;  
They bring me tokens of myself—they evince them  
plainly in their possession.



<sup>190</sup> I wonder where they get those tokens :  
Did I pass that way huge times ago, and negligently  
drop them ?

Myself moving forward then and now and forever,  
Gathering and showing more always and with velocity,  
Infinite and omnigenous, and the like of these among  
them ;

Not too exclusive toward the reachers of my remem-  
brancers ;

Picking out here one that I love, and now go with him  
on brotherly terms.

<sup>191</sup> A gigantic beauty of a stallion, fresh and responsive  
to my caresses,

Head high in the forehead, wide between the ears,  
Limbs glossy and supple, tail dusting the ground,  
Eyes full of sparkling wickedness—ears finely cut, flex-  
ibly moving.

<sup>192</sup> His nostrils dilate, as my heels embrace him ;  
His well-built limbs tremble with pleasure, as we race  
around and return.

<sup>193</sup> I but use you a moment, then I resign you, stallion ;  
Why do I need your paces, when I myself out-gallop  
them ?

• Even, as I stand or sit, passing faster than you.

## 33

<sup>194</sup> O swift wind ! O space and time ! now I see it is  
true, what I guessed at ;

What I guess'd when I loaf'd on the grass ;

What I guess'd while I lay alone in my bed,

And again as I walk'd the beach under the paling stars  
of the morning.

<sup>195</sup> My ties and ballasts leave me—I travel—I sail—my  
elbows rest in the sea-gaps ;

I skirt the sierras—my palms cover continents ;

I am afoot with my vision.



<sup>196</sup> By the city's quadrangular houses—in log huts—  
camping with lumbermen ;  
Along the ruts of the turnpike—along the dry gulch  
and rivulet bed ;  
Weeding my onion-patch, or hoeing rows of carrots and  
parsnips—crossing savannas—trailing in forests ;  
Prospecting—gold-digging—girdling the trees of a new  
purchase ;  
Scorch'd ankle-deep by the hot sand—hauling my boat  
down the shallow river ;  
Where the panther walks to and fro on a limb overhead  
—where the buck turns furiously at the hunter ;  
Where the rattlesnake suns his flabby length on a rock  
—where the otter is feeding on fish ;  
Where the alligator in his tough pimples sleeps by the  
bayou ;  
Where the black bear is searching for roots or honey—  
where the beaver pats the mud with his paddle-  
shaped tail ;  
Over the growing sugar—over the yellow-flower'd cotton  
plant—over the rice in its low moist field ;  
Over the sharp-peak'd farm house, with its scallop'd  
scum and slender shoots from the gutters ;  
Over the western persimmon—over the long-leav'd corn  
—over the delicate blue-flower flax ;  
Over the white and brown buckwheat, a hummer and  
buzzer there with the rest ;  
Over the dusky green of the rye as it ripples and shades  
in the breeze ;  
Scaling mountains, pulling myself cautiously up, hold-  
ing on by low scragged limbs ;  
Walking the path worn in the grass, and beat through  
the leaves of the brush ;  
Where the quail is whistling betwixt the woods and the  
wheat-lot ;  
Where the bat flies in the Seventh-month eve—where  
the great gold-bug drops through the dark ;  
Where flails keep time on the barn floor ;  
Where the brook puts out of the roots of the old tree  
and flows to the meadow ;

Where cattle stand and shake away flies with the tremulous shuddering of their hides ;  
Where the cheese-cloth hangs in the kitchen—where andirons straddle the hearth-slab—where cobwebs fall in festoons from the rafters ;  
Where trip-hammers crash—where the press is whirling its cylinders ;  
Wherever the human heart beats with terrible throes under its ribs ;  
Where the pear-shaped balloon is floating aloft, (floating in it myself, and looking composedly down ;)  
Where the life-car is drawn on the slip-noose—where the heat hatches pale-green eggs in the dented sand ;  
Where the she-whale swims with her calf, and never forsakes it ;  
Where the steam-ship trails hind-ways its long pennant of smoke ;  
Where the fin of the shark cuts like a black chip out of the water ;  
Where the half-burn'd brig is riding on unknown currents,  
Where shells grow to her slimy deck—where the dead are corrupting below ;  
Where the dense-starr'd flag is borne at the head of the regiments ;  
Approaching Manhattan, up by the long-stretching island ;  
Under Niagara, the cataract falling like a veil over my countenance ;  
Upon a door-step—upon the horse-block of hard wood outside ;  
Upon the race-course, or enjoying picnics or jigs, or a good game of base-ball ;  
At he-festivals, with blackguard gibes, ironical license, bull-dances, drinking, laughter ;  
At the cider-mill, tasting the sweets of the brown mash, sucking the juice through a straw ;  
At apple-peelings, wanting kisses for all the red fruit I find ;

At musters, beach-parties, friendly bees, huskings,  
house-raisings :  
Where the mocking-bird sounds his delicious gurgles,  
cackles, screams, weeps ;  
Where the hay-rick stands in the barn-yard—where the  
dry-stalks are scattered—where the brood-cow  
waits in the hovel ;  
Where the bull advances to do his masculine work—  
where the stud to the mare—where the cock is  
treading the hen ;  
Where the heifers browse—where geese nip their food  
with short jerks ;  
Where sun-down shadows lengthen over the limitless  
and lonesome prairie ;  
Where herds of buffalo make a crawling spread of the  
square miles far and near ;  
Where the humming-bird shimmers—where the neck of  
the long-lived swan is curving and winding ;  
Where the laughing-gull scoots by the shore, where  
she laughs her near-human laugh ;  
Where bee-hives range on a gray bench in the garden,  
half hid by the high weeds ;  
Where band-neck'd partridges roost in a ring on the  
ground with their heads out ;  
Where burial coaches enter the arch'd gates of a  
cemetery ;  
Where winter wolves bark amid wastes of snow and  
icied trees ;  
Where the yellow-crown'd heron comes to the edge of  
the marsh at night and feeds upon small crabs ;  
Where the splash of swimmers and divers cools the  
warm noon ;  
Where the katy-did works her chromatic reed on the  
walnut-tree over the well ;  
Through patches of citrons and cucumbers with silver-  
wired leaves ;  
Through the salt-lick or orange glade, or under conical  
firs ;  
Through the gymnasium—through the curtain'd saloon  
—through the office or public hall ;

Pleas'd with the native, and pleas'd with the foreign—  
pleas'd with the new and old ;  
Pleas'd with women, the homely as well as the handsome ;  
Pleas'd with the quakeress as she puts off her bonnet  
and talks melodiously ;  
Pleas'd with the tune of the choir of the white-wash'd  
church ;  
Pleas'd with the earnest words of the sweating Methodist  
preacher, or any preacher—impress'd seriously at the camp-meeting :  
Looking in at the shop-windows of Broadway the  
whole forenoon—flattering the flesh of my nose  
on the thick plate-glass ;  
Wandering the same afternoon with my face turn'd up  
to the clouds,  
My right and left arms round the sides of two friends,  
and I in the middle :  
Coming home with the silent and dark-cheek'd bush-  
boy—(behind me he rides at the drape of the  
day ;)  
Far from the settlements, studying the print of animals'  
feet, or the moccasin print ;  
By the cot in the hospital, reaching lemonade to a  
feverish patient ;  
Nigh the coffin'd corpse when all is still, examining with  
a candle :  
Voyaging to every port, to dicker and adventure ;  
Hurrying with the modern crowd, as eager and fickle  
as any ;  
Hot toward one I hate, ready in my madness to knife  
him ;  
Solitary at midnight in my back yard, my thoughts gone  
from me a long while ;  
Walking the old hills of Judea, with the beautiful gentle  
God by my side ;  
Speeding through space—speeding through heaven and  
the stars ;  
Speeding amid the seven satellites, and the broad ring,  
and the diameter of eighty thousand miles ;



Speeding with tail'd meteors—throwing fire-balls like  
the rest ;

Carrying the crescent child that carries its own full  
mother in its belly ;

Storming, enjoying, planning, loving, cautioning,

Backing and filling, appearing and disappearing ;

I tread day and night such roads.

<sup>197</sup> I visit the orchards of spheres, and look at the  
product :

And look at quintillions ripen'd, and look at quintillions  
green.

<sup>198</sup> I fly the flight of the fluid and swallowing soul ;

My course runs below the soundings of plummets.

<sup>199</sup> I help myself to material and immaterial ;

No guard can shut me off, nor law prevent me.

<sup>200</sup> I anchor my ship for a little while only ;

My messengers continually cruise away, or bring their  
returns to me.

<sup>201</sup> I go hunting polar furs and the seal—leaping chasms  
with a pike-pointed staff—clinging to topples of  
brittle and blue.

<sup>202</sup> I ascend to the foretruck ;

I take my place late at night in the crow's-nest ;

We sail the arctic sea—it is plenty light enough ;

Through the clear atmosphere I stretch around on the  
wonderful beauty ;

The enormous masses of ice pass me, and I pass them—  
the scenery is plain in all directions ;

The white-topt mountains show in the distance—I fling  
out my fancies toward them ;

(We are approaching some great battle-field in which  
we are soon to be engaged ;

We pass the colossal outposts of the encampment—we  
pass with still feet and caution ;



Or we are entering by the suburbs some vast and ruin'd  
 city ;  
 The blocks and fallen architecture more than all the  
 living cities of the globe.)

<sup>203</sup> I am a free companion—I bivouac by invading  
 watchfires.

<sup>204</sup> I turn the bridegroom out of bed, and stay with the  
 bride myself ;  
 I tighten her all night to my thighs and lips.

<sup>205</sup> My voice is the wife's voice, the screech by the rail  
 of the stairs ;  
 They fetch my man's body up, dripping and drown'd.

<sup>206</sup> I understand the large hearts of heroes,  
 The courage of present times and all times ;  
 How the skipper saw the crowded and rudderless wreck  
 of the steam-ship, and Death chasing it up and  
 down the storm ;  
 How he knuckled tight, and gave not back one inch,  
 and was faithful of days and faithful of nights,  
 And chalk'd in large letters, on a board, *Be of good  
 cheer, we will not desert you :*  
 How he follow'd with them, and tack'd with them—and  
 would not give it up ;  
 How he saved the drifting company at last :  
 How the lank loose-gown'd women look'd when boated  
 from the side of their prepared graves ;  
 How the silent old-faced infants, and the lifted sick, and  
 the sharp-lipp'd unshaved men :  
 All this I swallow—it tastes good—I like it well—it  
 becomes mine ;  
 I am the man—I suffer'd—I was there.

<sup>207</sup> The disdain and calmness of olden martyrs ;  
 The mother, condemn'd for a witch, burnt with dry  
 wood, her children gazing on ;  
 The hounded slave that flags in the race, leans by the  
 fence, blowing, cover'd with sweat ;

The twinges that sting like needles his legs and neck—  
the murderous buckshot and the bullets ;  
All these I feel, or am.

<sup>208</sup> I am the hounded slave, I wince at the bite of the  
dogs,  
Hell and despair are upon me, crack and again crack  
the marksmen ;  
I clutch the rails of the fence, my gore dribs, thinn'd  
with the ooze of my skin ;  
I fall on the weeds and stones ;  
The riders spur their unwilling horses, haul close,  
Taunt my dizzy ears, and beat me violently over the  
head with whip-stocks.

<sup>209</sup> Agonies are one of my changes of garments ;  
I do not ask the wounded person how he feels—I my-  
self become the wounded person ;  
My hurts turn livid upon me as I lean on a cane and  
observe.

<sup>210</sup> I am the mash'd fireman with breast-bone broken ;  
Tumbling walls buried me in their debris ;  
Heat and smoke I inspired—I heard the yelling shouts  
of my comrades ;  
I heard the distant click of their picks and shovels ;  
They have clear'd the beams away—they tenderly lift  
me forth.

<sup>211</sup> I lie in the night air in my red shirt—the pervading  
hush is for my sake ;  
Painless after all I lie, exhausted but not so unhappy ;  
White and beautiful are the faces around me—the  
heads are bared of their fire-caps ;  
The kneeling crowd fades with the light of the  
torches.

<sup>212</sup> Distant and dead resuscitate ;  
They show as the dial or move as the hands of me—  
I am the clock myself.

<sup>213</sup> I am an old artillerist—I tell of my fort's bombardment ;  
I am there again.

<sup>214</sup> Again the long roll of the drummers ;  
Again the attacking cannon, mortars ;  
Again, to my listening ears, the cannon responsive.

<sup>215</sup> I take part—I see and hear the whole ;  
The cries, curses, roar—the plaudits for well-aim'd shots ;  
The ambulanza slowly passing, trailing its red drip ;  
Workmen searching after damages, making indispensable repairs ;  
The fall of grenades through the rent roof—the fan-shaped explosion ;  
The whizz of limbs, heads, stone, wood, iron, high in the air.

<sup>216</sup> Again gurgles the mouth of my dying general—he furiously waves with his hand ;  
He gasps through the clot, *Mind not me—mind—the entrenchments.*

## 34

<sup>217</sup> Now I tell what I knew in Texas in my early youth ;  
(I tell not the fall of Alamo,  
Not one escaped to tell the fall of Alamo,  
The hundred and fifty are dumb yet at Alamo ;)  
'Tis the tale of the murder in cold blood of four hundred and twelve young men.

<sup>218</sup> Retreating, they had form'd in a hollow square, with their baggage for breastworks ;  
Nine hundred lives out of the surrounding enemy's, nine times their number, was the price they took in advance ;  
Their colonel was wounded and their ammunition gone ;  
They treated for an honorable capitulation, receiv'd writing and seal, gave up their arms, and march'd back prisoners of war.

<sup>219</sup> They were the glory of the race of rangers ;  
Matchless with horse, rifle, song, supper, courtship,  
Large, turbulent, generous, handsome, proud, and affectionate,  
Bearded, sunburnt, drest in the free costume of hunters,  
Not a single one over thirty years of age.

<sup>220</sup> The second First-day morning they were brought  
out in squads, and massacred—it was beautiful  
early summer ;  
The work commenced about five o'clock, and was over  
by eight.

<sup>221</sup> None obey'd the command to kneel ;  
Some made a mad and helpless rush—some stood stark  
and straight ;  
A few fell at once, shot in the temple or heart—the living  
and dead lay together ;  
The maim'd and mangled dug in the dirt—the newcomers  
saw them there ;  
Some, half-kill'd, attempted to crawl away ;  
These were despatch'd with bayonets, or batter'd with  
the blunts of muskets ;  
A youth not seventeen years old seiz'd his assassin till  
two more came to release him ;  
The three were all torn, and cover'd with the boy's  
blood.

<sup>222</sup> At eleven o'clock began the burning of the bodies :  
That is the tale of the murder of the four hundred and  
twelve young men.

## 35

<sup>223</sup> Would you hear of an old-fashion'd sea-fight?  
Would you learn who won by the light of the moon and  
stars?  
List to the story as my grandmother's father, the sailor,  
told it to me.

<sup>224</sup> Our foe was no skulk in his ship, I tell you, (said he;) His was the surly English pluck—and there is no tougher or truer, and never was, and never will be ;

Along the lower'd eve he came, horribly raking us.

<sup>225</sup> We closed with him—the yards entangled—the cannon touch'd ;

My captain lash'd fast with his own hands.

<sup>226</sup> We had receiv'd some eighteen pound shots under the water ;

On our lower-gun-deck two large pieces had burst at the first fire, killing all around, and blowing up overhead.

<sup>227</sup> Fighting at sun-down, fighting at dark ;

Ten o'clock at night, the full moon well up, our leaks on the gain, and five feet of water reported ;

The master-at-arms loosing the prisoners confined in the after-hold, to give them a chance for themselves.

<sup>228</sup> The transit to and from the magazine is now stopt by the sentinels,

They see so many strange faces, they do not know whom to trust.

<sup>229</sup> Our frigate takes fire ;

The other asks if we demand quarter ?

If our colors are struck, and the fighting is done ?

<sup>230</sup> Now I laugh content, for I hear the voice of my little captain,

*We have not struck, he composedly cries, we have just begun our part of the fighting.*

<sup>231</sup> Only three guns are in use ;

One is directed by the captain himself against the enemy's main-mast ;

Two, well served with grape and canister, silence his musketry and clear his decks.



<sup>232</sup> The tops alone second the fire of this little battery,  
especially the main-top ;  
They hold out bravely during the whole of the action.

<sup>233</sup> Not a moment's cease ;  
The leaks gain fast on the pumps—the fire eats toward  
the powder-magazine.

<sup>234</sup> One of the pumps has been shot away—it is generally  
thought we are sinking.

<sup>235</sup> Serene stands the little captain ;  
He is not hurried—his voice is neither high nor low ;  
His eyes give more light to us than our battle-lan-  
terns.

<sup>236</sup> Toward twelve at night, there in the beams of the  
moon, they surrender to us.

## 36

<sup>237</sup> Stretch'd and still lies the midnight ;  
Two great hulls motionless on the breast of the dark-  
ness ;  
Our vessel riddled and slowly sinking—preparations to  
pass to the one we have conquer'd ;  
The captain on the quarter-deck coldly giving his orders  
through a countenance white as a sheet ;  
Near by, the corpse of the child that serv'd in the  
cabin ;  
The dead face of an old salt with long white hair and  
carefully curl'd whiskers ;  
The flames, spite of all that can be done, flickering  
aloft and below ;  
The husky voices of the two or three officers yet fit for  
duty ;  
Formless stacks of bodies, and bodies by themselves—  
dabs of flesh upon the masts and spars,  
Cut of cordage, dangle of rigging, slight shock of the  
soothe of waves,

Black and impassive guns, litter of powder-parcels,  
 strong scent,  
 Delicate sniffs of sea-breeze, smells of sedgy grass and  
 fields by the shore, death-messages given in  
 charge to survivors,  
 The hiss of the surgeon's knife, the gnawing teeth of  
 his saw,  
 Wheeze, cluck, swash of falling blood, short wild  
 scream, and long, dull, tapering groan ;  
 These so—these irretrievable.

## 37

<sup>238</sup> O Christ ! This is mastering me !  
 In at the conquer'd doors they crowd. I am possess'd.

<sup>239</sup> I embody all presences outlaw'd or suffering ;  
 See myself in prison shaped like another man,  
 And feel the dull unintermitted pain.

<sup>240</sup> For me the keepers of convicts shoulder their car-  
 bines and keep watch ;  
 It is I let out in the morning, and barr'd at night.

<sup>241</sup> Not a mutineer walks handcuff'd to jail, but I am  
 handcuff'd to him and walk by his side ;  
 (I am less the jolly one there, and more the silent one,  
 with sweat on my twitching lips.)

<sup>242</sup> Not a youngster is taken for larceny, but I go up  
 too, and am tried and sentenced.

<sup>243</sup> Not a cholera patient lies at the last gasp, but I also  
 lie at the last gasp ;  
 My face is ash-color'd—my sinews gnarl—away from  
 me people retreat.

<sup>244</sup> Askers embody themselves in me, and I am embo-  
 died in them ;  
 I project my hat, sit shame-faced, and beg.

## 38

<sup>245</sup> Enough! enough! enough!  
Somehow I have been stunn'd. Stand back!  
Give me a little time beyond my cuff'd head, slumbers,  
dreams, gaping;  
I discover myself on the verge of a usual mistake.

<sup>246</sup> That I could forget the mockers and insults!  
That I could forget the trickling tears, and the blows  
of the bludgeons and hammers!  
That I could look with a separate look on my own cru-  
cifixion and bloody crowning.

<sup>247</sup> I remember now;  
I resume the overstaid fraction;  
The grave of rock multiplies what has been confided to  
it, or to any graves;  
Corpses rise, gashes heal, fastenings roll from me.

<sup>248</sup> I troop forth replenish'd with supreme power, one  
of an average unending procession;  
Inland and sea-coast we go, and we pass all boundary  
lines;  
Our swift ordinances on their way over the whole  
earth;  
The blossoms we wear in our hats the growth of thou-  
sands of years.

<sup>249</sup> Eleves, I salute you! come forward!  
Continue your annotations, continue your questionings.

## 39

<sup>250</sup> The friendly and flowing savage, Who is he?  
Is he waiting for civilization, or past it, and master-  
ing it?

<sup>251</sup> Is he some south-westerner, rais'd out-doors? Is he  
Kanadian?

Is he from the Mississippi country? Iowa, Oregon,  
California? the mountains? prairie-life, bush-  
life? or from the sea?

<sup>252</sup> Wherever he goes, men and women accept and de-  
sire him ;

They desire he should like them, touch them, speak to  
them, stay with them.

<sup>253</sup> Behavior lawless as snow-flakes, words simple as  
grass, uncomb'd head, laughter, and naiveté,  
Slow-stepping feet, common features, common modes  
and emanations ;

They descend in new forms from the tips of his fingers ;  
They are wafted with the odor of his body or breath—  
they fly out of the glance of his eyes.

## 40

<sup>254</sup> Flaunt of the sunshine, I need not your bask,—lie  
over!

You light surfaces only—I force surfaces and depths  
also.

<sup>255</sup> Earth! you seem to look for something at my hands ;  
Say, old Top-knot! what do you want?

<sup>256</sup> Man or woman! I might tell how I like you, but  
cannot ;

And might tell what it is in me, and what it is in you,  
but cannot ;

And might tell that pining I have—that pulse of my  
nights and days.

<sup>257</sup> Behold! I do not give lectures, or a little charity ;  
When I give, I give myself.

<sup>258</sup> You there, impotent, loose in the knees!  
Open your scarf'd chops till I blow grit within you ;  
Spread your palms, and lift the flaps of your pockets ;

I am not to be denied—I compel—I have stores plenty  
and to spare ;  
And anything I have I bestow.

<sup>259</sup> I do not ask who you are—that is not so important  
to me ;  
You can do nothing, and be nothing, but what I will  
infold you.

<sup>260</sup> To cotton-field drudge or cleaner of privies I lean ;  
On his right cheek I put the family kiss,  
And in my soul I swear, I never will deny him.

<sup>261</sup> On women fit for conception I start bigger and  
nimblar babes ;  
(This day I am jetting the stuff of far more arrogant  
republics.)

<sup>262</sup> To any one dying—thither I speed, and twist the  
knob of the door ;  
Turn the bed-clothes toward the foot of the bed ;  
Let the physician and the priest go home.

<sup>263</sup> I seize the descending man, and raise him with re-  
sistless will.

<sup>264</sup> O despairer, here is my neck ;  
By God! you shall not go down! Hang your whole  
weight upon me.

<sup>265</sup> I dilate you with tremendous breath—I buoy you  
up ;  
Every room of the house do I fill with an arm'd force,  
Lovers of me, bafflers of graves.

<sup>266</sup> Sleep! I and they keep guard all night ;  
Not doubt—not decease shall dare to lay finger upon  
you ;  
I have embraced you, and henceforth possess you to  
myself ;



And when you rise in the morning you will find what I  
tell you is so.

## 41

<sup>267</sup> I am he bringing help for the sick as they pant on  
their backs ;  
And for strong upright men I bring yet more needed  
help.

<sup>268</sup> I heard what was said of the universe ;  
Heard it and heard it of several thousand years :  
It is middling well as far as it goes,—But is that all ?

<sup>269</sup> Magnifying and applying come I,  
Outbidding at the start the old cautious hucksters,  
Taking myself the exact dimensions of Jehovah,  
Lithographing Kronos, Zeus his son, and Hercules his  
grandson ;  
Buying drafts of Osiris, Isis, Belus, Brahma, Buddha,  
In my portfolio placing Manito loose, Allah on a leaf,  
the crucifix engraved,  
With Odin, and the hideous-faced Mexitli, and every  
idol and image ;  
Taking them all for what they are worth, and not a cent  
more ;  
Admitting they were alive and did the work of their  
days ;  
(They bore mites, as for unfledg'd birds, who have now  
to rise and fly and sing for themselves ;)   
Accepting the rough deific sketches to fill out better in  
myself—bestowing them freely on each man and  
woman I see ;  
Discovering as much, or more, in a framer framing a  
house ;  
Putting higher claims for him there with his roll'd-up  
sleeves, driving the mallet and chisel ;  
Not objecting to special revelations—considering a curl  
of smoke, or a hair on the back of my hand, just  
as curious as any revelation ;

Lads ahold of fire-engines and hook-and-ladder ropes  
 no less to me than the Gods of the antique wars ;  
 Minding their voices peal through the crash of destruction,  
 Their brawny limbs passing safe over charr'd laths—  
 their white foreheads whole and unhurt out of  
 the flames :  
 By the mechanic's wife with her babe at her nipple interceding  
 for every person born ;  
 Three scythes at harvest whizzing in a row from three  
 lusty angels with shirts bagg'd out at their waists ;  
 The snag-tooth'd hostler with red hair redeeming sins  
 past and to come,  
 Selling all he possesses, traveling on foot to fee lawyers  
 for his brother, and sit by him while he is tried  
 for forgery ;  
 What was strewn in the amplest strewing the square  
 rod about me, and not filling the square rod  
 then ;  
 The bull and the bug never worship'd half enough ;  
 Dung and dirt more admirable than was dream'd ;  
 The supernatural of no account—myself waiting my  
 time to be one of the Supremes ;  
 The day getting ready for me when I shall do as much  
 good as the best, and be as prodigious :  
 By my life-lumps ! becoming already a creator ;  
 Putting myself here and now to the ambush'd womb of  
 the shadows.

## 42

<sup>270</sup> A call in the midst of the crowd ;  
 My own voice, orotund, sweeping, and final.

<sup>271</sup> Come my children ;  
 Come my boys and girls, my women, household, and  
 intimates ;  
 Now the performer launches his nerve—he has pass'd  
 his prelude on the reeds within.

<sup>272</sup> Easily written, loose-finger'd chords ! I feel the thrum  
 of your climax and close.

<sup>273</sup> My head slues round on my neck ;  
Music rolls, but not from the organ ;  
Folks are around me, but they are no household of  
mine.

<sup>274</sup> Ever the hard, unsunk ground ;  
Ever the eaters and drinkers—ever the upward and  
downward sun—ever the air and the ceaseless  
tides ;  
Ever myself and my neighbors, refreshing, wicked, real ;  
Ever the old inexplicable query—ever that thorn'd  
thumb—that breath of itches and thirsts ;  
Ever the vexer's *hoot ! hoot !* till we find where the sly  
one hides, and bring him forth ;  
Ever love—ever the sobbing liquid of life ;  
Ever the bandage under the chin—ever the tressels of  
death.

<sup>275</sup> Here and there, with dimes on the eyes, walking ;  
To feed the greed of the belly, the brains liberally  
spooning ;  
Tickets buying, taking, selling, but in to the feast never  
once going ;  
Many sweating, ploughing, thrashing, and then the chaff  
for payment receiving ;  
A few idly owning, and they the wheat continually  
claiming.

<sup>276</sup> This is the city, and I am one of the citizens ;  
Whatever interests the rest interests me—politics, wars,  
markets, newspapers, schools, .  
Benevolent societies, improvements, banks, tariffs,  
steamships, factories, stocks, stores, real estate,  
and personal estate.

<sup>277</sup> The little plentiful mannikins, skipping around in  
collars and tail'd coats,  
I am aware who they are—(they are positively not  
worms or fleas.)

<sup>278</sup> I acknowledge the duplicates of myself—the weakest  
and shallowest is deathless with me ;  
What I do and say, the same waits for them ;  
Every thought that flounders in me, the same flounders  
in them.

<sup>279</sup> I know perfectly well my own egotism ;  
I know my omnivorous lines, and will not write any  
less ;  
And would fetch you, whoever you are, flush with  
myself.

<sup>280</sup> No words of routine are mine,  
But abruptly to question, to leap beyond, yet nearer  
bring :  
This printed and bound book—but the printer, and the  
printing-office boy ?  
The well-taken photographs—but your wife or friend  
close and solid in your arms ?  
The black ship, mail'd with iron, her mighty guns in  
her turrets—but the pluck of the captain and  
engineers ?  
In the houses, the dishes and fare and furniture—but  
the host and hostess, and the look out of their  
eyes ?  
The sky up there—yet here, or next door, or across the  
way ?  
The saints and sages in history—but you yourself ?  
Sermons, creeds, theology—but the fathomless human  
brain,  
And what is reason ? and what is love ? and what is life ?

## 43

<sup>281</sup> I do not despise you, priests ;  
My faith is the greatest of faiths, and the least of faiths,  
Enclosing worship ancient and modern, and all between  
ancient and modern,  
Believing I shall come again upon the earth after five  
thousand years,  
Waiting responses from oracles, honoring the Gods,  
saluting the sun,

Making a fetish of the first rock or stump, powwowing  
 with sticks in the circle of obis,  
 Helping the lama or brahmin as he trims the lamps of  
 the idols,  
 Dancing yet through the streets in a phallic proces-  
 sion—rapt and austere in the woods, a gymno-  
 sophist,  
 Drinking mead from the skull-cup—to Shastas and  
 Vedas admirant—minding the Koran,  
 Walking the teokallis, spotted with gore from the stone  
 and knife, beating the serpent-skin drum,  
 Accepting the Gospels—accepting him that was cruci-  
 fied, knowing assuredly that he is divine,  
 To the mass kneeling, or the puritan's prayer rising, or  
 sitting patiently in a pew,  
 Ranting and frothing in my insane crisis, or waiting  
 dead-like till my spirit arouses me,  
 Looking forth on pavement and land, or outside of  
 pavement and land,  
 Belonging to the winders of the circuit of circuits.

<sup>282</sup> One of that centripetal and centrifugal gang, I turn  
 and talk, like a man leaving charges before a  
 journey.

<sup>283</sup> Down-hearted doubters, dull and excluded,  
 Frivolous, sullen, moping, angry, affected, dishearten'd,  
 atheistical ;  
 I know every one of you—I know the sea of torment,  
 doubt, despair and unbelief.

<sup>284</sup> How the flukes splash !  
 How they contort, rapid as lightning, with spasms, and  
 spouts of blood !

<sup>285</sup> Be at peace, bloody flukes of doubters and sullen  
 mopers ;  
 I take my place among you as much as among any ;  
 The past is the push of you, me, all, precisely the same,  
 And what is yet untried and afterward is for you, me,  
 all, precisely the same.



<sup>286</sup> I do not know what is untried and afterward ;  
But I know it will in its turn prove sufficient, and cannot fail.

<sup>287</sup> Each who passes is consider'd—each who stops is consider'd—not a single one can it fail.

<sup>288</sup> It cannot fail the young man who died and was buried,

Nor the young woman who died and was put by his side,

Nor the little child that peep'd in at the door, and then drew back, and was never seen again,

Nor the old man who has lived without purpose, and feels it with bitterness worse than gall,

Nor him in the poor house, tubercled by rum and the bad disorder,

Nor the numberless slaughter'd and wreck'd—nor the brutish koboo call'd the ordure of humanity,

Nor the sacs merely floating with open mouths for food to slip in,

Nor anything in the earth, or down in the oldest graves of the earth,

Nor anything in the myriads of spheres—nor one of the myriads of myriads that inhabit them,

Nor the present—nor the least wisp that is known.

## 44

<sup>289</sup> It is time to explain myself—Let us stand up.

<sup>290</sup> What is known I strip away ;

I launch all men and women forward with me into THE UNKNOWN.

<sup>291</sup> The clock indicates the moment—but what does eternity indicate ?

<sup>292</sup> We have thus far exhausted trillions of winters and summers ;

There are trillions ahead, and trillions ahead of them.

<sup>293</sup> Births have brought us richness and variety,  
And other births will bring us richness and variety.

<sup>294</sup> I do not call one greater and one smaller ;  
That which fills its period and place is equal to any.

<sup>295</sup> Were mankind murderous or jealous upon you, my  
brother, my sister?  
I am sorry for you—they are not murderous or jealous  
upon me ;  
All has been gentle with me—I keep no account with  
lamentation ;  
(What have I to do with lamentation ?)

<sup>296</sup> I am an acme of things accomplish'd, and I an en-  
closer of things to be.

<sup>297</sup> My feet strike an apex of the apices of the stairs ;  
On every step bunches of ages, and larger bunches be-  
tween the steps ;  
All below duly travel'd, and still I mount and mount.

<sup>298</sup> Rise after rise bow the phantoms behind me ;  
Afar down I see the huge first Nothing—I know I was  
even there ;  
I waited unseen and always, and slept through the leth-  
argic mist,  
And took my time, and took no hurt from the fetid  
carbon.

<sup>299</sup> Long I was hugg'd close—long and long.

<sup>300</sup> Immense have been the preparations for me,  
Faithful and friendly the arms that have help'd me.

<sup>301</sup> Cycles ferried my cradle, rowing and rowing like  
cheerful boatmen ;  
For room to me stars kept aside in their own rings ;  
They sent influences to look after what was to hold me.

<sup>302</sup> Before I was born out of my mother, generations  
guided me ;  
My embryo has never been torpid—nothing could overlay it.

<sup>303</sup> For it the nebula cohered to an orb,  
The long slow strata piled to rest it on,  
Vast vegetables gave it sustenance,  
Monstrous sauroids transported it in their mouths, and  
deposited it with care.

<sup>304</sup> All forces have been steadily employ'd to complete  
and delight me ;  
Now on this spot I stand with my robust Soul.

## 45

<sup>305</sup> O span of youth ! Ever-push'd elasticity !  
O manhood, balanced, florid, and full.

<sup>306</sup> My lovers suffocate me !  
Crowding my lips, thick in the pores of my skin,  
Jostling me through streets and public halls—coming  
naked to me at night,  
Crying by day *Ahoy!* from the rocks of the river—  
swinging and chirping over my head,  
Calling my name from flower-beds, vines, tangled under-  
brush,  
Lighting on every moment of my life,  
Bussing my body with soft balsamic busses,  
Noiselessly passing handfuls out of their hearts, and  
giving them to be mine.

<sup>307</sup> Old age superbly rising ! O welcome, ineffable grace  
of dying days !

<sup>308</sup> Every condition promulges not only itself—it promulges  
what grows after and out of itself,  
And the dark hush promulges as much as any.

<sup>309</sup> I open my scuttle at night and see the far-sprinkled  
systems,

And all I see, multiplied as high as I can cipher, edge  
but the rim of the farther systems.

<sup>310</sup> Wider and wider they spread, expanding, always ex-  
panding,  
Outward and outward, and forever outward.

<sup>311</sup> My sun has his sun, and round him obediently  
wheels,  
He joins with his partners a group of superior circuit,  
And greater sets follow, making specks of the greatest  
inside them.

<sup>312</sup> There is no stoppage, and never can be stoppage ;  
If I, you, and the worlds, and all beneath or upon their  
surfaces, were this moment reduced back to a  
pallid float, it would not avail in the long run ;  
We should surely bring up again where we now stand,  
And as surely go as much farther—and then farther and  
farther.

<sup>313</sup> A few quadrillions of eras, a few octillions of cubic  
leagues, do not hazard the span, or make it im-  
patient ;  
They are but parts—anything is but a part.

<sup>314</sup> See ever so far, there is limitless space outside of that ;  
Count ever so much, there is limitless time around that.

<sup>315</sup> My rendezvous is appointed—it is certain ;  
The Lord will be there, and wait till I come, on perfect  
terms ;  
(The great Camerado, the lover true for whom I pine,  
will be there.)

## 46

<sup>316</sup> I know I have the best of time and space, and was  
never measured, and never will be measured.

<sup>317</sup> I tramp a perpetual journey—(come listen all !)  
My signs are a rain-proof coat, good shoes, and a staff  
cut from the woods ;

No friend of mine takes his ease in my chair ;  
I have no chair, no church, no philosophy ;  
I lead no man to a dinner-table, library, or exchange ;  
But each man and each woman of you I lead upon a  
knoll,

My left hand hooking you round the waist,  
My right hand pointing to landscapes of continents,  
and a plain public road.

<sup>318</sup> Not I—not any one else, can travel that road for  
you,  
You must travel it for yourself.

<sup>319</sup> It is not far—it is within reach ;  
Perhaps you have been on it since you were born, and  
did not know ;  
Perhaps it is every where on water and on land.

<sup>320</sup> Shoulder your duds, dear son, and I will mine, and  
let us hasten forth,  
Wonderful cities and free nations we shall fetch as  
we go.

<sup>321</sup> If you tire, give me both burdens, and rest the chuff  
of your hand on my hip,  
And in due time you shall repay the same service to  
me ;  
For after we start, we never lie by again.

<sup>322</sup> This day before dawn I ascended a hill, and look'd at  
the crowded heaven,  
And I said to my Spirit, *When we become the enfolders  
of those orbs, and the pleasure and knowledge of  
everything in them, shall we be fill'd and satisfied  
then?*  
And my Spirit said, *No, we but level that lift, to pass and  
continue beyond.*

<sup>323</sup> You are also asking me questions, and I hear you ;  
I answer that I cannot answer—you must find out for  
yourself.



<sup>324</sup> Sit a while, dear son ;  
Here are biscuits to eat, and here is milk to drink ;  
But as soon as you sleep, and renew yourself in sweet  
clothes, I kiss you with a good-bye kiss, and open  
the gate for your egress hence.

<sup>325</sup> Long enough have you dream'd contemptible dreams ;  
Now I wash the gum from your eyes ;  
You must habit yourself to the dazzle of the light, and  
of every moment of your life.

<sup>326</sup> Long have you timidly waded, holding a plank by  
the shore ;  
Now I will you to be a bold swimmer,  
To jump off in the midst of the sea, rise again, nod to  
me, shout, and laughingly dash with your hair.

## 47

<sup>327</sup> I am the teacher of athletes ;  
He that by me spreads a wider breast than my own,  
proves the width of my own ;  
He most honors my style who learns under it to destroy  
the teacher.

<sup>328</sup> The boy I love, the same becomes a man, not  
through derived power, but in his own right,  
Wicked, rather than virtuous out of conformity or fear,  
Fond of his sweetheart, relishing well his steak,  
Unrequited love, or a slight, cutting him worse than  
sharp steel cuts,  
First-rate to ride, to fight, to hit the bull's eye, to sail a  
skiff, to sing a song, or play on the banjo,  
Preferring scars, and the beard, and faces pitted with  
small-pox, over all latherers,  
And those well tann'd to those that keep out of the sun.

<sup>329</sup> I teach straying from me—yet who can stray from  
me ?  
I follow you, whoever you are, from the present hour ;  
My words itch at your ears till you understand them.

<sup>330</sup> I do not say these things for a dollar, or to fill up  
the time while I wait for a boat ;  
It is you talking just as much as myself—I act as the  
tongue of you ;  
Tied in your mouth, in mine it begins to be loosen'd.

<sup>331</sup> I swear I will never again mention love or death in-  
side a house,  
And I swear I will never translate myself at all, only to  
him or her who privately stays with me in the  
open air.

<sup>332</sup> If you would understand me, go to the heights or  
water-shore ;  
The nearest gnat is an explanation, and a drop or mo-  
tion of waves a key ;  
The maul, the oar, the hand-saw, second my words.

<sup>333</sup> No shutter'd room or school can commune with me,  
But roughs and little children better than they.

<sup>334</sup> The young mechanic is closest to me—he knows me  
well ;  
The woodman, that takes his axe and jug with him,  
shall take me with him all day ;  
The farm-boy, ploughing in the field, feels good at the  
sound of my voice ;  
In vessels that sail, my words sail—I go with fishermen  
and seamen, and love them.

<sup>335</sup> The soldier camp'd, or upon the march, is mine ;  
On the night ere the pending battle, many seek me, and  
I do not fail them ;  
On the solemn night (it may be their last,) those that  
know me, seek me.

<sup>336</sup> My face rubs to the hunter's face, when he lies down  
alone in his blanket ;  
The driver, thinking of me, does not mind the jolt of  
his wagon ;

The young mother and old mother comprehend me ;  
 The girl and the wife rest the needle a moment, and  
     forget where they are ;  
 They and all would resume what I have told them.

## 48

<sup>337</sup> I have said that the soul is not more than the body,  
 And I have said that the body is not more than the soul;  
 And nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's-  
     self is,  
 And whoever walks a furlong without sympathy, walks  
     to his own funeral, drest in his shroud,  
 And I or you, pocketless of a dime, may purchase the  
     pick of the earth,  
 And to glance with an eye, or show a bean in its pod,  
     confounds the learning of all times,  
 And there is no trade or employment but the young  
     man following it may become a hero,  
 And there is no object so soft but it makes a hub for the  
     wheel'd universe,  
 And I say to any man or woman, Let your soul stand  
     cool and composed before a million universes.

<sup>338</sup> And I say to mankind, Be not curious about God,  
 For I, who am curious about each, am not curious about  
     God ;  
 (No array of terms can say how much I am at peace  
     about God, and about death.)

<sup>339</sup> I hear and behold God in every object, yet under-  
     stand God not in the least,  
 Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful  
     than myself.

<sup>340</sup> Why should I wish to see God better than this day?  
 I see something of God each hour of the twenty-four,  
     and each moment then ;  
 In the faces of men and women I see God, and in my  
     own face in the glass ;  
 I find letters from God dropt in the street—and every  
     one is sign'd by God's name,

And I leave them where they are, for I know that  
 wheresoe'er I go,  
 Others will punctually come forever and ever.

## 49

<sup>341</sup> And as to you Death, and you bitter hug of mortal-  
 ity, it is idle to try to alarm me.

<sup>342</sup> To his work without flinching the accoucheur comes;  
 I see the elder-hand, pressing, receiving, supporting;  
 I recline by the sills of the exquisite flexible doors,  
 And mark the outlet, and mark the relief and escape.

<sup>343</sup> And as to you, Corpse, I think you are good manure  
 —but that does not offend me;  
 I smell the white roses sweet-scented and growing,  
 I reach to the leafy lips—I reach to the polish'd breasts  
 of melons.

<sup>344</sup> And as to you Life, I reckon you are the leavings of  
 many deaths;  
 (No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times  
 before.)

<sup>345</sup> I hear you whispering there, O stars of heaven;  
 O suns! O grass of graves! O perpetual transfers and  
 promotions!  
 If you do not say anything, how can I say anything?

<sup>346</sup> Of the turbid pool that lies in the autumn forest,  
 Of the moon that descends the steep of the souging  
 twilight,  
 Toss, sparkles of day and dusk! toss on the black stems  
 that decay in the muck!  
 Toss to the moaning gibberish of the dry limbs.

<sup>347</sup> I ascend from the moon, I ascend from the night;  
 I perceive that the ghastly glimmer is noonday sunbeams  
 reflected;  
 And debouch to the steady and central from the off-  
 spring great or small.

## 50

<sup>348</sup> There is that in me—I do not know what it is—but  
I know it is in me.

<sup>349</sup> Wrench'd and sweaty—calm and cool then my body  
becomes ;  
I sleep—I sleep long.

<sup>350</sup> I do not know it—it is without name—it is a word  
unsaid ;  
It is not in any dictionary, utterance, symbol.

<sup>351</sup> Something it swings on more than the earth I swing  
on ;  
To it the creation is the friend whose embracing awakes  
me.

<sup>352</sup> Perhaps I might tell more. Outlines ! I plead for  
my brothers and sisters.

<sup>353</sup> Do you see, O my brothers and sisters ?  
It is not chaos or death—it is form, union, plan—it is  
eternal life—it is HAPPINESS.

## 51

<sup>354</sup> The past and present wilt—I have fill'd them, emp-  
tied them,  
And proceed to fill my next fold of the future.

<sup>355</sup> Listener up there ! Here, you ! What have you to  
confide to me ?  
Look in my face, while I snuff the sidle of evening ;  
Talk honestly—no one else hears you, and I stay only a  
minute longer.

<sup>356</sup> Do I contradict myself ?  
Very well, then, I contradict myself ;  
(I am large—I contain multitudes.)

<sup>357</sup> I concentrate toward them that are nigh—I wait on  
the door-slab.



<sup>358</sup> Who has done his day's work? Who will soonest be  
through with his supper?  
Who wishes to walk with me?

<sup>359</sup> Will you speak before I am gone? Will you prove  
already too late?

## 52

<sup>360</sup> The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me—he  
complains of my gab and my loitering.

<sup>361</sup> I too am not a bit tamed—I too am untranslatable;  
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

<sup>362</sup> The last scud of day holds back for me;  
It flings my likeness after the rest, and true as any, on  
the shadow'd wilds;  
It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.

<sup>363</sup> I depart as air—I shake my white locks at the run-  
away sun;  
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.

<sup>364</sup> I bequeathe myself to the dirt, to grow from the  
grass I love;  
If you want me again, look for me under your boot-  
soles.

<sup>365</sup> You will hardly know who I am, or what I mean;  
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,  
And filter and fibre your blood.

<sup>366</sup> Failing to fetch me at first, keep encouraged;  
Missing me one place, search another;  
I stop somewhere, waiting for you.

## LAWS FOR CREATIONS.

<sup>1</sup> LAWS for Creations,

For strong artists and leaders—for fresh broods of  
 teachers, and perfect literats for America,  
 For noble savans, and coming musicians.

<sup>2</sup> All must have reference to the ensemble of the world,  
 and the compact truth of the world ;  
 There shall be no subject too pronounced—All works  
 shall illustrate the divine law of indirections.

<sup>3</sup> What do you suppose Creation is ?

What do you suppose will satisfy the Soul, except to  
 walk free, and own no superior ?

What do you suppose I would intimate to you in a hun-  
 dred ways, but that man or woman is as good as  
 God ?

And that there is no God any more divine than Your-  
 self ?

And that that is what the oldest and newest myths  
 finally mean ?

And that you or any one must approach Creations  
 through such laws ?



## VISOR'D.

A MASK—a perpetual natural disguiser of herself,  
 Concealing her face, concealing her form,  
 Changes and transformations every hour, every mo-  
 ment,  
 Falling upon her even when she sleeps.

# CHILDREN OF ADAM.

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## TO THE GARDEN, THE WORLD.

To THE garden, the world, anew ascending,  
Potent mates, daughters, sons, preluding,  
The love, the life of their bodies, meaning and being,  
Curious, here behold my resurrection, after slumber ;  
The revolving cycles, in their wide sweep, having brought  
me again,  
Amorous, mature—all beautiful to me—all wondrous ;  
My limbs, and the quivering fire that ever plays through  
them, for reasons, most wondrous ;  
Existing, I peer and penetrate still,  
Content with the present—content with the past,  
By my side, or back of me, Eve following,  
Or in front, and I following her just the same.

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## FROM PENT-UP ACHING RIVERS.

From pent-up, aching rivers ;  
From that of myself, without which I were nothing ;  
From what I am determin'd to make illustrious, even  
if I stand sole among men ;  
From my own voice resonant—singing the phallus,  
Singing the song of procreation,

Singing the need of superb children, and therein superb  
grown people,  
Singing the muscular urge and the blending,  
Singing the bedfellow's song, (O resistless yearning!  
O for any and each, the body correlative attracting!  
O for you, whoever you are, your correlative body! O  
it, more than all else, you delighting!)  
—From the hungry gnaw that eats me night and  
day;  
From native moments—from bashful pains—singing  
them;  
Singing something yet unfound, though I have dili-  
gently sought it, many a long year;  
Singing the true song of the Soul, fitful, at random;  
Singing what, to the Soul, entirely redeem'd her, the  
faithful one, even the prostitute, who detain'd  
me when I went to the city;  
Singing the song of prostitutes;  
Renascent with grossest Nature, or among animals;  
Of that—of them, and what goes with them, my poems  
informing;  
Of the smell of apples and lemons—of the pairing of  
birds,  
Of the wet of woods—of the lapping of waves,  
Of the mad pushes of waves upon the land—I them  
chanting;  
The overture lightly sounding—the strain anticipat-  
ing;  
The welcome nearness—the sight of the perfect body;  
The swimmer swimming naked in the bath, or motion-  
less on his back lying and floating;  
The female form approaching—I, pensive, love-flesh  
tremulous, aching;  
The divine list, for myself or you, or for any one, mak-  
ing;  
The face—the limbs—the index from head to foot, and  
what it arouses;  
The mystic deliria—the madness amorous—the utter  
abandonment;  
(Hark close, and still, what I now whisper to you,  
I love you—O you entirely possess me,

O I wish that you and I escape from the rest, and go  
utterly off—O free and lawless,  
Two hawks in the air—two fishes swimming in the sea  
not more lawless than we ;)  
—The furious storm through me careering—I passionately  
trembling ;  
The oath of the inseparableness of two together—of the  
woman that loves me, and whom I love more  
than my life—that oath swearing ;  
(O I willingly stake all, for you !  
O let me be lost, if it must be so !  
O you and I—what is it to us what the rest do or  
think ?  
What is all else to us ? only that we enjoy each other,  
and exhaust each other, if it must be so :)  
—From the master—the pilot I yield the vessel to ;  
The general commanding me, commanding all—from  
him permission taking ;  
From time the programme hastening, (I have loiter'd  
too long, as it is ;)  
From sex—From the warp and from the woof ;  
(To talk to the perfect girl who understands me,  
To waft to her these from my own lips—to effuse them  
from my own body ;)  
From privacy—from frequent repinings alone ;  
From plenty of persons near, and yet the right person  
not near ;  
From the soft sliding of hands over me, and thrusting  
of fingers through my hair and beard ;  
From the long sustain'd kiss upon the mouth or  
bosom ;  
From the close pressure that makes me or any man  
drunk, fainting with excess ;  
From what the divine husband knows—from the work  
of fatherhood ;  
From exultation, victory, and relief—from the bedfel-  
low's embrace in the night ;  
From the act-poems of eyes, hands, hips, and bosoms,  
From the cling of the trembling arm,  
From the bending curve and the clinch,  
From side by side, the pliant coverlid off-throwing,



From the one so unwilling to have me leave—and me  
     just as unwilling to leave,  
 (Yet a moment, O tender waiter, and I return ;)  
 —From the hour of shining stars and dropping dews,  
 From the night, a moment, I, emerging, flitting out,  
 Celebrate you, act divine—and you, children prepared  
     for,  
 And you, stalwart loins.



## I SING THE BODY ELECTRIC.

### 1

<sup>1</sup> I SING the Body electric ;  
 The armies of those I love engirth me, and I engirth  
     them ;  
 They will not let me off till I go with them, respond to  
     them,  
 And discorrupt them, and charge them full with the  
     charge of the Soul.

<sup>2</sup> Was it doubted that those who corrupt their own  
     bodies conceal themselves?  
 And if those who defile the living are as bad as they  
     who defile the dead?  
 And if the body does not do as much as the Soul?  
 And if the body were not the Soul, what is the Soul?

### 2

<sup>3</sup> The love of the Body of man or woman balks ac-  
     count—the body itself balks account ;  
 That of the male is perfect, and that of the female is  
     perfect.

<sup>4</sup> The expression of the face balks account ;

But the expression of a well-made man appears not  
only in his face ;  
It is in his limbs and joints also, it is curiously in the  
joints of his hips and wrists ;  
It is in his walk, the carriage of his neck, the flex of his  
waist and knees—dress does not hide him ;  
The strong, sweet, supple quality he has, strikes through  
the cotton and flannel ;  
To see him pass conveys as much as the best poem,  
perhaps more ;  
You linger to see his back, and the back of his neck  
and shoulder-side.

<sup>s</sup> The sprawl and fulness of babes, the bosoms and  
heads of women, the folds of their dress, their  
style as we pass in the street, the contour of  
their shape downwards,  
The swimmer naked in the swimming-bath, seen as he  
swims through the transparent green-shine, or  
lies with his face up, and rolls silently to and fro  
in the heave of the water,  
The bending forward and backward of rowers in row-  
boats—the horseman in his saddle,  
Girls, mothers, house-keepers, in all their performances,  
The group of laborers seated at noon-time with their  
open dinner-kettles, and their wives waiting,  
The female soothing a child—the farmer's daughter in  
the garden or cow-yard,  
The young fellow hoeing corn—the sleigh-driver guiding  
his six horses through the crowd,  
The wrestle of wrestlers, two apprentice-boys, quite  
grown, lusty, good-natured, native-born, out on  
the vacant lot at sun-down, after work,  
The coats and caps thrown down, the embrace of love  
and resistance,  
The upper-hold and under-hold, the hair rumpled over  
and blinding the eyes ;  
The march of firemen in their own costumes, the play  
of masculine muscle through clean-setting trow-  
sers and waist-straps,

The slow return from the fire, the pause when the bell strikes suddenly again, and the listening on the alert,

The natural, perfect, varied attitudes—the bent head, the curv'd neck, and the counting ;

Such-like I love—I loosen myself, pass freely, am at the mother's breast with the little child,

Swim with the swimmers, wrestle with wrestlers, march in line with the firemen, and pause, listen, and count.

## 3

<sup>6</sup> I knew a man, a common farmer—the father of five sons ;

And in them were the fathers of sons—and in them were the fathers of sons.

<sup>7</sup> This man was of wonderful vigor, calmness, beauty of person ;

The shape of his head, the pale yellow and white of his hair and beard, and the immeasurable meaning of his black eyes—the richness and breadth of his manners,

These I used to go and visit him to see—he was wise also ;

He was six feet tall, he was over eighty years old—his sons were massive, clean, bearded, tan-faced, handsome ;

They and his daughters loved him—all who saw him loved him ;

They did not love him by allowance—they loved him with personal love ;

He drank water only—the blood show'd like scarlet through the clear-brown skin of his face ;

He was a frequent gunner and fisher—he sail'd his boat himself—he had a fine one presented to him by a ship-joiner—he had fowling-pieces, presented to him by men that loved him ;

When he went with his five sons and many grand-sons to hunt or fish, you would pick him out as the most beautiful and vigorous of the gang,

You would wish long and long to be with him—you  
would wish to sit by him in the boat, that you  
and he might touch each other.

## 4

<sup>8</sup> I have perceiv'd that to be with those I like is enough,  
To stop in company with the rest at evening is enough,  
To be surrounded by beautiful, curious, breathing,  
laughing flesh is enough,  
To pass among them, or touch any one, or rest my arm  
ever so lightly round his or her neck for a mo-  
ment—what is this, then ?  
I do not ask any more delight—I swim in it, as in a sea.

<sup>9</sup> There is something in staying close to men and women,  
and looking on them, and in the contact and  
odor of them, that pleases the soul well ;  
All things please the soul—but these please the soul  
well.

## 5

<sup>10</sup> This is the female form ;  
A divine nimbus exhales from it from head to foot ;  
It attracts with fierce undeniable attraction !  
I am drawn by its breath as if I were no more than a  
helpless vapor—all falls aside but myself and it ;  
Books, art, religion, time, the visible and solid earth,  
the atmosphere and the clouds, and what was  
expected of heaven or fear'd of hell, are now  
consumed ;  
Mad filaments, ungovernable shoots play out of it—the  
response likewise ungovernable ;  
Hair, bosom, hips, bend of legs, negligent falling hands,  
all diffused—mine too diffused ;  
Ebb stung by the flow, and flow stung by the ebb—  
love-flesh swelling and deliciously aching ;  
Limitless limpid jets of love hot and enormous, quiver-  
ing jelly of love, white-blow and delirious juice ;  
Bridegroom night of love, working surely and softly  
into the prostrate dawn ;

Undulating into the willing and yielding day,  
Lost in the cleave of the claspings and sweet-flesh'd day.

<sup>11</sup> This is the nucleus—after the child is born of woman,  
the man is born of woman ;  
This is the bath of birth—this is the merge of small  
and large, and the outlet again.

<sup>12</sup> Be not ashamed, women—your privilege encloses the  
rest, and is the exit of the rest ;  
You are the gates of the body, and you are the gates of  
the soul.

<sup>13</sup> The female contains all qualities, and tempers them  
—she is in her place, and moves with perfect  
balance ;  
She is all things duly veil'd—she is both passive and  
active ;  
She is to conceive daughters as well as sons, and sons  
as well as daughters.

<sup>14</sup> As I see my soul reflected in nature ;  
As I see through a mist, one with inexpressible com-  
pleteness and beauty,  
See the bent head, and arms folded over the breast—  
the female I see.

## 6

<sup>15</sup> The male is not less the soul, nor more—he too is in  
his place ;  
He too is all qualities—he is action and power ;  
The flush of the known universe is in him ;  
Scorn becomes him well, and appetite and defiance be-  
come him well ;  
The wildest largest passions, bliss that is utmost, sor-  
row that is utmost, become him well—pride is  
for him ;  
The full-spread pride of man is calming and excellent  
to the soul ;  
Knowledge becomes him—he likes it always—he brings  
everything to the test of himself ;



Whatever the survey, whatever the sea and the sail, he  
strikes soundings at last only here ;  
(Where else does he strike soundings, except here?)

<sup>16</sup> The man's body is sacred, and the woman's body is  
sacred ;

No matter who it is, it is sacred ;

Is it a slave ? Is it one of the dull-faced immigrants  
just landed on the wharf ?

Each belongs here or anywhere, just as much as the  
well-off—just as much as you ;

Each has his or her place in the procession.

<sup>17</sup> (All is a procession ;

The universe is a procession, with measured and beau-  
tiful motion.)

<sup>18</sup> Do you know so much yourself, that you call the slave  
or the dull-face ignorant ?

Do you suppose you have a right to a good sight, and  
he or she has no right to a sight ?

Do you think matter has cohered together from its dif-  
fuse float—and the soil is on the surface, and  
water runs, and vegetation sprouts,

For you only, and not for him and her ?

## 7

<sup>19</sup> A man's Body at auction ;

I help the auctioneer—the sloven does not half know  
his business.

<sup>20</sup> Gentlemen, look on this wonder !

Whatever the bids of the bidders, they cannot be high  
enough for it ;

For it the globe lay preparing quintillions of years,  
without one animal or plant ;

For it the revolving cycles truly and steadily roll'd.

<sup>21</sup> In this head the all-baffling brain ;

In it and below it, the makings of heroes.

<sup>22</sup> Examine these limbs, red, black, or white—they are  
so cunning in tendon and nerve ;  
They shall be stript, that you may see them.

<sup>23</sup> Exquisite senses, life-lit eyes, pluck, volition,  
Flakes of breast-muscle, pliant back-bone and neck, flesh  
not flabby, good-sized arms and legs,  
And wonders within there yet.

<sup>24</sup> Within there runs blood,  
The same old blood !  
The same red-running blood !  
There swells and jets a heart—there all passions, de-  
sires, reachings, aspirations ;  
Do you think they are not there because they are not  
express'd in parlors and lecture-rooms?

<sup>25</sup> This is not only one man—this is the father of those  
who shall be fathers in their turns ;  
In him the start of populous states and rich republics ;  
Of him countless immortal lives, with countless embod-  
iments and enjoyments.

<sup>26</sup> How do you know who shall come from the offspring  
of his offspring through the centuries ?  
Who might you find you have come from yourself, if  
you could trace back through the centuries ?

## 8

<sup>27</sup> A woman's Body at auction !  
She too is not only herself—she is the teeming mother  
of mothers ;  
She is the bearer of them that shall grow and be mates  
to the mothers.

<sup>28</sup> Have you ever loved the Body of a woman ?  
Have you ever loved the Body of a man ?  
Your father—where is your father ?  
Your mother—is she living ? have you been much with  
her ? and has she been much with you ?

—Do you not see that these are exactly the same to all,  
in all nations and times, all over the earth?

<sup>29</sup> If any thing is sacred, the human body is sacred,  
And the glory and sweet of a man, is the token of man-  
hood untainted ;  
And in man or woman, a clean, strong, firm-fibred body,  
is beautiful as the most beautiful face.

<sup>30</sup> Have you seen the fool that corrupted his own live  
body? or the fool that corrupted her own live body?  
For they do not conceal themselves, and cannot conceal  
themselves.

## 9

<sup>31</sup> O my Body! I dare not desert the likes of you in  
other men and women, nor the likes of the parts  
of you ;

I believe the likes of you are to stand or fall with the  
likes of the Soul, (and that they are the Soul ;)

I believe the likes of you shall stand or fall with my  
poems—and that they are poems,

Man's, woman's, child's, youth's, wife's, husband's,  
mother's, father's, young man's, young woman's  
poems ;

Head, neck, hair, ears, drop and tympan of the ears,  
Eyes, eye-fringes, iris of the eye, eye-brows, and the  
waking or sleeping of the lids,

Mouth, tongue, lips, teeth, roof of the mouth, jaws, and  
the jaw-hinges,

Nose, nostrils of the nose, and the partition,

Cheeks, temples, forehead, chin, throat, back of the  
neck, neck-slue,

Strong shoulders, manly beard, scapula, hind-shoulders,  
and the ample side-round of the chest.

Upper-arm, arm-pit, elbow-socket, lower-arm, arm-  
sinews, arm-bones,

Wrist and wrist-joints, hand, palm, knuckles, thumb,  
fore-finger, finger-balls, finger-joints, finger-nails,

Broad breast-front, curling hair of the breast, breast-  
bone, breast-side,

Ribs, belly, back-bone, joints of the back-bone,  
Hips, hip-sockets, hip-strength, inward and outward  
    round, man-balls, man-root,  
Strong set of thighs, well carrying the trunk above,  
Leg-fibres, knee, knee-pan, upper-leg, under leg,  
Ankles, instep, foot-ball, toes, toe-joints, the heel ;  
All attitudes, all the shapeliness, all the belongings of  
    my or your body, or of any one's body, male or  
    female,  
The lung-sponges, the stomach-sac, the bowels sweet  
    and clean,  
The brain in its folds inside the skull-frame,  
Sympathies, heart-valves, palate-valves, sexuality, ma-  
    ternity,  
Womanhood, and all that is a woman—and the man  
    that comes from woman,  
The womb, the teats, nipples, breast-milk, tears, laugh-  
    ter, weeping, love-looks, love-perturbations and  
    risings,  
The voice, articulation, language, whispering, shouting  
    aloud,  
Food, drink, pulse, digestion, sweat, sleep, walking,  
    swimming,  
Poise on the hips, leaping, reclining, embracing, arm-  
    curving and tightening,  
The continual changes of the flex of the mouth, and  
    around the eyes,  
The skin, the sun-burnt shade, freckles, hair,  
The curious sympathy one feels, when feeling with the  
    hand the naked meat of the body,  
The circling rivers, the breath, and breathing it in and out,  
The beauty of the waist, and thence of the hips, and  
    thence downward toward the knees,  
The thin red jellies within you, or within me—the bones,  
    and the marrow in the bones,  
The exquisite realization of health ;  
O I say, these are not the parts and poems of the Body  
    only, but of the Soul,  
O I say now these are the Soul!



## A WOMAN WAITS FOR ME.

<sup>1</sup> A WOMAN waits for me—she contains all, nothing is lacking,

Yet all were lacking, if sex were lacking, or if the moisture of the right man were lacking.

<sup>2</sup> Sex contains all,

Bodies, Souls, meanings, proofs, purities, delicacies, results, promulgations,

Songs, commands, health, pride, the maternal mystery, the seminal milk ;

All hopes, benefactions, bestowals,

All the passions, loves, beauties, delights of the earth,

All the governments, judges, gods, follow'd persons of the earth,

These are contain'd in sex, as parts of itself, and justifications of itself.

<sup>3</sup> Without shame the man I like knows and avows the deliciousness of his sex,

Without shame the woman I like knows and avows hers.

<sup>4</sup> Now I will dismiss myself from impassive women,

I will go stay with her who waits for me, and with those women that are warm-blooded and sufficient for me ;

I see that they understand me, and do not deny me ;

I see that they are worthy of me—I will be the robust husband of those women.

<sup>5</sup> They are not one jot less than I am,

They are tann'd in the face by shining suns and blowing winds,

Their flesh has the old divine suppleness and strength,

They know how to swim, row, ride, wrestle, shoot, run, strike, retreat, advance, resist, defend themselves,



They are ultimate in their own right—they are calm,  
clear, well-possess'd of themselves.

<sup>6</sup> I draw you close to me, you women!  
I cannot let you go, I would do you good,  
I am for you, and you are for me, not only for our own  
sake, but for others' sakes;  
Envelop'd in you sleep greater heroes and bards,  
They refuse to awake at the touch of any man but me.

<sup>7</sup> It is I, you women—I make my way,  
I am stern, acrid, large, undissuadable—but I love you,  
I do not hurt you any more than is necessary for you,  
I pour the stuff to start sons and daughters fit for  
These States—I press with slow rude muscle,  
I brace myself effectually—I listen to no entreaties,  
I dare not withdraw till I deposit what has so long  
accumulated within me.

<sup>8</sup> Through you I drain the pent-up rivers of myself,  
In you I wrap a thousand onward years,  
On you I graft the grafts of the best-beloved of me and  
America,  
The drops I distil upon you shall grow fierce and ath-  
letic girls, new artists, musicians, and singers,  
The babes I beget upon you are to beget babes in their  
turn,  
I shall demand perfect men and women out of my love-  
spendings,  
I shall expect them to interpenetrate with others, as I  
and you interpenetrate now,  
I shall count on the fruits of the gushing showers of  
them, as I count on the fruits of the gushing  
showers I give now,  
I shall look for loving crops from the birth, life, death,  
immortality, I plant so lovingly now.

## SPONTANEOUS ME.

SPONTANEOUS me, Nature,  
The loving day, the mounting sun, the friend I am  
happy with,  
The arm of my friend hanging idly over my shoulder,  
The hill-side whiten'd with blossoms of the mountain  
ash,  
The same, late in autumn—the hues of red, yellow,  
drab, purple, and light and dark green,  
The rich coverlid of the grass—animals and birds—  
the private untrimm'd bank—the primitive ap-  
ples—the pebble-stones,  
Beautiful dripping fragments—the negligent list of one  
after another, as I happen to call them to me, or  
think of them,  
The real poems, (what we call poems being merely pic-  
tures,)  
The poems of the privacy of the night, and of men like  
me,  
This poem, drooping shy and unseen, that I always  
carry, and that all men carry,  
(Know, once for all, avow'd on purpose, wherever are  
men like me, are our lusty, lurking, masculine  
poems;)  
Love-thoughts, love-juice, love-odor, love-yielding, love-  
climbers, and the climbing sap,  
Arms and hands of love—lips of love—phallic thumb  
of love—breasts of love—bellies press'd and  
glued together with love,  
Earth of chaste love—life that is only life after love,  
The body of my love—the body of the woman I love—  
the body of the man—the body of the earth,  
Soft forenoon airs that blow from the south-west,  
The hairy wild-bee that murmurs and hankers up and  
down—that gripes the full-grown lady-flower,  
curves upon her with amorous firm legs, takes  
his will of her, and holds himself tremulous and  
tight till he is satisfied,

The wet of woods through the early hours,  
Two sleepers at night lying close together as they sleep,  
    one with an arm slanting down across and below  
    the waist of the other,  
The smell of apples, aromas from crush'd sage-plant,  
    mint, birch-bark,  
The boy's longings, the glow and pressure as he con-  
    fides to me what he was dreaming,  
The dead leaf whirling its spiral whirl, and falling still  
    and content to the ground,  
The no-form'd stings that sights, people, objects, sting  
    me with,  
The hubb'd sting of myself, stinging me as much as it  
    ever can any one,  
The sensitive, orbic, underlapp'd brothers, that only  
    privileged feelers may be intimate where they  
    are,  
The curious roamer, the hand, roaming all over the  
    body—the bashful withdrawing of flesh where  
    the fingers soothingly pause and edge them-  
    selves,  
The limpid liquid within the young man,  
The vexed corrosion, so pensive and so painful,  
The torment—the irritable tide that will not be at rest,  
The like of the same I feel—the like of the same in  
    others,  
The young man that flushes and flushes, and the young  
    woman that flushes and flushes,  
The young man that wakes, deep at night, the hot  
    hand seeking to repress what would master  
    him ;  
The mystic amorous night—the strange half-welcome  
    pangs, visions, sweats,  
The pulse pounding through palms and trembling en-  
    circling fingers—the young man all color'd, red,  
    ashamed, angry ;  
The souse upon me of my lover the sea, as I lie willing  
    and naked,  
The merriment of the twin-babes that crawl over the  
    grass in the sun, the mother never turning her  
    vigilant eyes from them,

The walnut-trunk, the walnut-husks, and the ripening  
     or ripen'd long-round walnuts ;  
 The continence of vegetables, birds, animals,  
 The consequent meanness of me should I skulk or find  
     myself indecent, while birds and animals never  
     once skulk or find themselves indecent ;  
 The great chastity of paternity, to match the great  
     chastity of maternity,  
 The oath of procreation I have sworn—my Adamic and  
     fresh daughters,  
 The greed that eats me day and night with hungry  
     gnaw, till I saturate what shall produce boys to  
     fill my place when I am through,  
 The wholesome relief, repose, content ;  
 And this bunch, pluck'd at random from myself ;  
 It has done its work—I toss it carelessly to fall where  
     it may.

---

### ONE HOUR TO MADNESS AND JOY.

<sup>1</sup> ONE hour to madness and joy!  
 O furious ! O confine me not !  
 (What is this that frees me so in storms ?  
 What do my shouts amid lightnings and raging winds  
     mean ?)

<sup>2</sup> O to drink the mystic deliria deeper than any other  
     man !  
 O savage and tender aching !  
 (I bequeath them to you, my children,  
 I tell them to you, for reasons, O bridegroom and bride.)

<sup>3</sup> O to be yielded to you, whoever you are, and you to  
     be yielded to me, in defiance of the world !  
 O to return to Paradise ! O bashful and feminine !  
 O to draw you to me—to plant on you for the first time  
     the lips of a determin'd man !

<sup>4</sup> O the puzzle—the thrice-tied knot—the deep and dark  
 pool ! O all untied and illumin'd !  
 O to speed where there is space enough and air enough  
 at last !  
 O to be absolv'd from previous ties and conventions—I  
 from mine, and you from yours !  
 O to find a new unthought-of nonchalance with the best  
 of nature !  
 O to have the gag remov'd from one's mouth !  
 O to have the feeling, to-day or any day, I am sufficient  
 as I am !

<sup>5</sup> O something unprov'd ! something in a trance !  
 O madness amorous ! O trembling !  
 O to escape utterly from others' anchors and holds !  
 To drive free ! to love free ! to dash reckless and dan-  
 gerous !  
 To court destruction with taunts—with invitations !  
 To ascend—to leap to the heavens of the love indicated  
 to me !  
 To rise thither with my inebriate Soul !  
 To be lost, if it must be so !  
 To feed the remainder of life with one hour of fulness  
 and freedom !  
 With one brief hour of madness and joy.



## WE TWO—HOW LONG WE WERE FOOL'D.

WE two—how long we were fool'd !  
 Now transmuted, we swiftly escape, as Nature escapes ;  
 We are Nature—long have we been absent, but now we  
 return ;  
 We become plants, leaves, foliage, roots, bark ;  
 We are bedded in the ground—we are rocks ;  
 We are oaks—we grow in the openings side by side ;  
 We browse—we are two among the wild herds, spon-  
 taneous as any ;



We are two fishes swimming in the sea together ;  
We are what the locust blossoms are—we drop scent  
    around the lanes, mornings and evenings ;  
We are also the coarse smut of beasts, vegetables,  
    minerals ;  
We are two predatory hawks—we soar above, and look  
    down ;  
We are two resplendent suns—we it is who balance  
    ourselves, orbic and stellar—we are as two  
    comets ;  
We prowl fang'd and four-footed in the woods—we  
    spring on prey ;  
We are two clouds, forenoons and afternoons, driving  
    overhead ;  
We are seas mingling—we are two of those cheerful  
    waves, rolling over each other, and interwetting  
    each other ;  
We are what the atmosphere is, transparent, receptive,  
    pervious, impervious :  
We are snow, rain, cold, darkness—we are each product  
    and influence of the globe ;  
We have circled and circled till we have arrived home  
    again—we two have ;  
We have voided all but freedom, and all but our own  
    joy.

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## OUT OF THE ROLLING OCEAN, THE CROWD.

## 1

Out of the rolling ocean, the crowd, came a drop gently  
    to me,  
Whispering, *I love you, before long I die,*  
*I have travel'd a long way, merely to look on you, to touch*  
    *you,*  
*For I could not die till I once look'd on you,*  
*For I fear'd I might afterward lose you.*

## 2

(Now we have met, we have look'd, we are safe ;  
 Return in peace to the ocean, my love ;  
 I too am part of that ocean, my love—we are not so  
     much separated ;  
 Behold the great rondure—the cohesion of all, how perfect!  
 But as for me, for you, the irresistible sea is to separate  
     us,  
 As for an hour, carrying us diverse—yet cannot carry  
     us diverse for ever ;  
 Be not impatient—a little space—Know you, I salute  
     the air, the ocean and the land,  
 Every day, at sundown, for your dear sake, my love.)



## NATIVE MOMENTS.

NATIVE moments! when you come upon me—Ah you  
     are here now!  
 Give me now libidinous joys only!  
 Give me the drench of my passions! Give me life  
     coarse and rank!  
 To-day, I go consort with nature's darlings—to-night  
     too ;  
 I am for those who believe in loose delights—I share  
     the midnight orgies of young men ;  
 I dance with the dancers, and drink with the drinkers ;  
 The echoes ring with our indecent calls ;  
 I take for my love some prostitute—I pick out some low  
     person for my dearest friend,  
 He shall be lawless, rude, illiterate—he shall be one  
     condemn'd by others for deeds done ;  
 I will play a part no longer—Why should I exile myself  
     from my companions?  
 O you shunn'd persons! I at least do not shun you,  
 I come forthwith in your midst—I will be your poet,  
 I will be more to you than to any of the rest.

## ONCE I PASS'D THROUGH A POPULOUS CITY.

ONCE I pass'd through a populous city, imprinting my  
brain, for future use, with its shows, architec-  
ture, customs, and traditions ;  
Yet now, of all that city, I remember only a woman I  
casually met there, who detain'd me for love of  
me ;  
Day by day and night by night we were together,—All  
else has long been forgotten by me ;  
I remember, I say, only that woman who passionately  
clung to me ;  
Again we wander—we love—we separate again ;  
Again she holds me by the hand—I must not go !  
I see her close beside me, with silent lips, sad and trem-  
ulous.

---

## FACING WEST FROM CALIFORNIA'S SHORES.

FACING west, from California's shores,  
Inquiring, tireless, seeking what is yet unfound,  
I, a child, very old, over waves, towards the house of  
maternity, the land of migrations, look afar,  
Look off the shores of 'my Western Sea—the circle  
almost circled ;  
For, starting westward from Hindustan, from the vales  
of Kashmere,  
From Asia—from the north—from the God, the sage,  
and the hero,  
From the south—from the flowery peninsulas, and the  
spice islands ;  
Long having wander'd since—round the earth having  
wander'd,  
Now I face home again—very pleas'd and joyous ;  
(But where is what I started for, so long ago ?  
And why is it yet unfound ?)

## AGES AND AGES, RETURNING AT INTERVALS.

AGES and ages, returning at intervals,  
 Undestroy'd, wandering immortal,  
 Lusty, phallic, with the potent original loins, perfectly  
     sweet,  
 I, chanter of Adamic songs,  
 Through the new garden, the West, the great cities  
     calling,  
 Deliriate, thus prelude what is generated, offering these,  
     offering myself,  
 Bathing myself, bathing my songs in Sex,  
 Offspring of my loins.



## O HYMEN! O HYMENEE!

O HYMEN! O hymeneee!  
 Why do you tantalize me thus?  
 O why sting me for a swift moment only?  
 Why can you not continue? O why do you now cease?  
 Is it because, if you continued beyond the swift mo-  
     ment, you would soon certainly kill me?



## AS ADAM, EARLY IN THE MORNING.

As Adam, early in the morning,  
 Walking forth from the bower, refresh'd with sleep;  
 Behold me where I pass—hear my voice—approach,  
 Touch me—touch the palm of your hand to my Body  
     as I pass;  
 Be not afraid of my Body.

## I Heard You, Solemn-sweet Pipes of the Organ.

I HEARD you, solemn-sweet pipes of the organ, as last  
Sunday morn I pass'd the church ;  
Winds of autumn !—as I walk'd the woods at dusk, I  
heard your long-stretch'd sighs, up above, so  
mournful ;  
I heard the perfect Italian tenor, singing at the opera  
—I heard the soprano in the midst of the quartet  
singing ;  
... Heart of my love !—you too I heard, murmuring  
low, through one of the wrists around my head ;  
Heard the pulse of you, when all was still, ringing little  
bells last night under my ear.

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## I AM HE THAT ACHES WITH LOVE.

I AM he that aches with amorous love ;  
Does the earth gravitate ? Does not all matter, aching,  
attract all matter ?  
So the Body of me, to all I meet, or know.



## TO HIM THAT WAS CRUCIFIED.

My spirit to yours, dear brother ;  
Do not mind because many, sounding your name, do  
not understand you ;  
I do not sound your name, but I understand you, (there  
are others also ;)  
I specify you with joy, O my comrade, to salute you,  
and to salute those who are with you, before and  
since—and those to come also,  
That we all labor together, transmitting the same  
charge and succession ;  
We few, equals, indifferent of lands, indifferent of  
times ;  
We, enclosers of all continents, all castes—allowers of  
all theologies,  
Compassionaters, perceivers, rapport of men,  
We walk silent among disputes and assertions, but  
reject not the disputers, nor any thing that is  
asserted ;  
We hear the bawling and din—we are reach'd at by  
divisions, jealousies, recriminations on every  
side,  
They close peremptorily upon us, to surround us, my  
comrade,  
Yet we walk unheld, free, the whole earth over, jour-  
neying up and down, till we make our inefface-  
able mark upon time and the diverse eras,  
Till we saturate time and eras, that the men and wo-  
men of races, ages to come, may prove brethren  
and lovers, as we are.



## PERFECTIONS.

ONLY themselves understand themselves, and the like  
of themselves,  
As Souls only understand Souls.

## CALAMUS.



### IN PATHS UNTRODDEN.

In paths untrodden,  
In the growth by margins of pond-waters,  
Escaped from the life that exhibits itself,  
From all the standards hitherto publish'd—from the  
    pleasures, profits, eruditions, conformities,  
Which too long I was offering to feed my soul ;  
Clear to me, now, standards not yet publish'd—clear to  
    me that my Soul,  
That the Soul of the man I speak for, feeds, rejoices  
    most in comrades ;  
Here, by myself, away from the clank of the world,  
Tallying and talk'd to here by tongues aromatic,  
No longer abash'd—for in this secluded spot I can re-  
    spond as I would not dare elsewhere,  
Strong upon me the life that does not exhibit itself, yet  
    contains all the rest,  
Resolv'd to sing no songs to-day but those of manly  
    attachment,  
Projecting them along that substantial life,  
Bequeathing, hence, types of athletic love,  
Afternoon, this delicious Ninth-month, in my forty-first  
    year,  
I proceed, for all who are, or have been, young men,  
To tell the secret of my nights and days,  
To celebrate the need of comrades.

## SCENTED HERBAGE OF MY BREAST.

SCENTED herbage of my breast,  
Leaves from you I yield, I write, to be perused best  
afterwards,  
Tomb-leaves, body-leaves, growing up above me, above  
death,  
Perennial roots, tall leaves—O the winter shall not  
freeze you, delicate leaves,  
Every year shall you bloom again—Out from where you  
retired, you shall emerge again ;  
O I do not know whether many, passing by, will dis-  
cover you, or inhale your faint odor—but I be-  
lieve a few will ;  
O slender leaves ! O blossoms of my blood ! I permit  
you to tell, in your own way, of the heart that  
is under you ;  
O burning and throbbing—surely all will one day be  
accomplish'd ;  
O I do not know what you mean, there underneath  
yourselves—you are not happiness,  
You are often more bitter than I can bear—you burn  
and sting me,  
Yet you are very beautiful to me, you faint-tinged  
roots—you make me think of Death,  
Death is beautiful from you—(what indeed is finally  
beautiful, except Death and Love ?)  
—O I think it is not for life I am chanting here my  
chant of lovers—I think it must be for Death,  
For how calm, how solemn it grows, to ascend to the  
atmosphere of lovers,  
Death or life I am then indifferent—my Soul declines  
to prefer,  
I am not sure but the high Soul of lovers welcomes  
death most ;  
Indeed, O Death, I think now these leaves mean pre-  
cisely the same as you mean ;  
Grow up taller, sweet leaves, that I may see ! grow up  
out of my breast !

Spring away from the conceal'd heart there !  
Do not fold yourself so in your pink-tinged roots, timid  
leaves !  
Do not remain down there so ashamed, herbage of my  
breast !  
Come, I am determin'd to unbare this broad breast of  
mine—I have long enough stifled and choked :  
—Emblematic and capricious blades, I leave you—now  
you serve me not ;  
Away ! I will say what I have to say, by itself,  
I will escape from the sham that was proposed to me,  
I will sound myself and comrades only—I will never  
again utter a call, only their call,  
I will raise, with it, immortal reverberations through  
The States,  
I will give an example to lovers, to take permanent  
shape and will through The States ;  
Through me shall the words be said to make death  
exhilarating ;  
Give me your tone therefore, O Death, that I may ac-  
cord with it,  
Give me yourself—for I see that you belong to me now  
above all, and are folded inseparably together—  
you Love and Death are ;  
Nor will I allow you to balk me any more with what I  
was calling life,  
For now it is convey'd to me that you are the purports  
essential,  
That you hide in these shifting forms of life, for reasons  
—and that they are mainly for you,  
That you, beyond them, come forth, to remain, the real  
reality,  
That behind the mask of materials you patiently wait,  
no matter how long,  
That you will one day, perhaps, take control of all,  
That you will perhaps dissipate this entire show of  
appearance,  
That may-be you are what it is all for—but it does not  
last so very long ;  
But you will last very long.

Whoever you are, Holding me now in Hand.

<sup>1</sup> WHOEVER you are, holding me now in hand,  
Without one thing, all will be useless,  
I give you fair warning, before you attempt me further,  
I am not what you supposed, but far different.

<sup>2</sup> Who is he that would become my follower?  
Who would sign himself a candidate for my affections?

<sup>3</sup> The way is suspicious—the result uncertain, perhaps  
destructive;  
You would have to give up all else—I alone would expect  
to be your God, sole and exclusive,  
Your novitiate would even then be long and exhausting,  
The whole past theory of your life, and all conformity  
to the lives around you, would have to be abandon'd;  
Therefore release me now, before troubling yourself any  
further—Let go your hand from my shoulders,  
Put me down, and depart on your way.

<sup>4</sup> Or else, by stealth, in some wood, for trial,  
Or back of a rock, in the open air,  
(For in any roof'd room of a house I emerge not—nor  
in company,  
And in libraries I lie as one dumb, a gawk, or unborn,  
or dead,)  
But just possibly with you on a high hill—first watching  
lest any person, for miles around, approach  
unawares,  
Or possibly with you sailing at sea, or on the beach of  
the sea, or some quiet island,  
Here to put your lips upon mine I permit you,  
With the comrade's long-dwelling kiss, or the new husband's  
kiss,  
For I am the new husband, and I am the comrade.

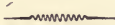
<sup>5</sup> Or, if you will, thrusting me beneath your clothing,



Where I may feel the throbs of your heart, or rest upon  
 your hip,  
 Carry me when you go forth over land or sea ;  
 For thus, merely touching you, is enough—is best,  
 And thus, touching you, would I silently sleep and be  
 carried eternally.

<sup>6</sup> But these leaves conning, you con at peril,  
 For these leaves, and me, you will not understand,  
 They will elude you at first, and still more afterward—  
 I will certainly elude you,  
 Even while you should think you had unquestionably  
 caught me, behold !  
 Already you see I have escaped from you.

<sup>7</sup> For it is not for what I have put into it that I have  
 written this book,  
 Nor is it by reading it you will acquire it,  
 Nor do those know me best who admire me, and vaunt-  
 ingly praise me,  
 Nor will the candidates for my love, (unless at most a  
 very few,) prove victorious,  
 Nor will my poems do good only—they will do just as  
 much evil, perhaps more ;  
 For all is useless without that which you may guess at  
 many times and not hit—that which I hinted at ;  
 Therefore release me, and depart on your way.



### THESE I, SINGING IN SPRING.

THESE, I, singing in spring, collect for lovers,  
 (For who but I should understand lovers, and all their  
 sorrow and joy ?  
 And who but I should be the poet of comrades ?)  
 Collecting, I traverse the garden, the world—but soon  
 I pass the gates,

Now along the pond-side—now wading in a little, fear-  
ing not the wet,  
Now by the post-and-rail fences, where the old stones  
thrown there, pick'd from the fields, have accu-  
mulated,  
(Wild-flowers and vines and weeds come up through  
the stones, and partly cover them—Beyond these  
I pass,)  
Far, far in the forest, before I think where I go,  
Solitary, smelling the earthy smell, stopping now and  
then in the silence,  
Alone I had thought—yet soon a troop gathers around  
me,  
Some walk by my side, and some behind, and some em-  
brace my arms or neck,  
They, the spirits of dear friends, dead or alive—thicker  
they come, a great crowd, and I in the middle,  
Collecting, dispensing, singing in spring, there I wander  
with them,  
Plucking something for tokens—tossing toward whoever  
is near me ;  
Here! lilac, with a branch of pine,  
Here, out of my pocket, some moss which I pull'd off a  
live-oak in Florida, as it hung trailing down,  
Here, some pinks and laurel leaves, and a handful of  
sage,  
And here what I now draw from the water, wading in  
the pond-side,  
(O here I last saw him that tenderly loves me—and re-  
turns again, never to separate from me,  
And this, O this shall henceforth be the token of com-  
rades—this Calamus-root shall,  
Interchange it, youths, with each other! Let none  
render it back!)  
And twigs of maple, and a bunch of wild orange, and  
chestnut,  
And stems of currants, and plum-blows, and the aro-  
matic cedar :  
These, I, compass'd around by a thick cloud of spirits,  
Wandering, point to, or touch as I pass, or throw them  
loosely from me,

Indicating to each one what he shall have—giving something to each ;  
 But what I drew from the water by the pond-side, that I reserve,  
 I will give of it—but only to them that love, as I myself am capable of loving.

---

### A SONG.

#### 1

COME, I will make the continent indissoluble ;  
 I will make the most splendid race the sun ever yet shone upon ;  
 I will make divine magnetic lands,  
     With the love of comrades,  
     With the life-long love of comrades.

#### 2

I will plant companionship thick as trees along all the rivers of America, and along the shores of the great lakes, and all over the prairies ;  
 I will make inseparable cities, with their arms about each other's necks ;  
     By the love of comrades,  
     By the manly love of comrades.

#### 3

For you these, from me, O Democracy, to serve you, ma femme !  
 For you ! for you, I am trilling these songs,  
     In the love of comrades,  
     In the high-towering love of comrades.

## NOT HEAVING FROM MY RIBB'D BREAST ONLY.

Not heaving from my ribb'd breast only ;  
Not in sighs at night, in rage, dissatisfied with myself ;  
Not in those long-drawn, ill-suppress'd sighs ;  
Not in many an oath and promise broken ;  
Not in my wilful and savage soul's volition ;  
Not in the subtle nourishment of the air ;  
Not in this beating and pounding at my temples and  
wrists ;  
Not in the curious systole and diastole within, which  
will one day cease ;  
Not in many a hungry wish, told to the skies only ;  
Not in cries, laughter, defiances, thrown from me when  
alone, far in the wilds ;  
Not in husky pantings through clench'd teeth ;  
Not in sounded and resounded words—chattering words,  
echoes, dead words ;  
Not in the murmurs of my dreams while I sleep,  
Nor the other murmurs of these incredible dreams of  
every day ;  
Nor in the limbs and senses of my body, that take you  
and dismiss you continually—Not there ;  
Not in any or all of them, O adhesiveness ! O pulse of  
my life !  
Need I that you exist and show yourself, any more than  
in these songs.

---

## OF THE TERRIBLE DOUBT OF APPEARANCES.

OF the terrible doubt of appearances,  
Of the uncertainty after all—that we may be deluded,  
That may-be reliance and hope are but speculations  
after all,  
That may-be identity beyond the grave is a beautiful  
fable only,

May-be the things I perceive—the animals, plants, men,  
 hills, shining and flowing waters,  
 The skies of day and night—colors, densities, forms—  
 May-be these are, (as doubtless they are,) only  
 apparitions, and the real something has yet to be  
 known ;  
 (How often they dart out of themselves, as if to con-  
 found me and mock me !  
 How often I think neither I know, nor any man knows,  
 aught of them ;)

May-be seeming to me what they are, (as doubtless they  
 indeed but seem,) as from my present point of  
 view—And might prove, (as of course they  
 would,) naught of what they appear, or naught  
 any how, from entirely changed points of view ;  
 —To me, these, and the like of these, are curiously an-  
 swer'd by my lovers, my dear friends ;  
 When he whom I love travels with me, or sits a long  
 while holding me by the hand,  
 When the subtle air, the impalpable, the sense that  
 words and reason hold not, surround us and  
 pervade us,  
 Then I am charged with untold and untellable wisdom  
 —I am silent—I require nothing further,  
 I cannot answer the question of appearances, or that  
 of identity beyond the grave ;  
 But I walk or sit indifferent—I am satisfied,  
 He ahold of my hand has completely satisfied me.



## The Base of all Metaphysics.

<sup>1</sup> AND now, gentlemen,  
 A word I give to remain in your memories and minds,  
 As base, and finale too, for all metaphysics.

<sup>2</sup> (So, to the students, the old professor,  
 At the close of his crowded course.)



<sup>3</sup> Having studied the new and antique, the Greek and  
Germanic systems,  
Kant having studied and stated—Fichte and Schelling  
and Hegel,  
Stated the lore of Plato—and Socrates, greater than  
Plato,  
And greater than Socrates sought and stated—Christ  
divine having studied long,  
I see reminiscent to-day those Greek and Germanic  
systems,  
See the philosophies all—Christian churches and tenets  
see,  
Yet underneath Socrates clearly see—and underneath  
Christ the divine I see,  
The dear love of man for his comrade—the attraction  
of friend to friend,  
Of the well-married husband and wife—of children and  
parents,  
Of city for city, and land for land.

---

## RECORDERS AGES HENCE.

RECORDERS ages hence !  
Come, I will take you down underneath this impassive  
exterior—I will tell you what to say of me ;  
Publish my name and hang up my picture as that of  
the tenderest lover,  
The friend, the lover's portrait, of whom his friend, his  
lover, was fondest,  
Who was not proud of his songs, but of the measure-  
less ocean of love within him—and freely pour'd  
it forth,  
Who often walk'd lonesome walks, thinking of his dear  
friends, his lovers,  
Who pensive, away from one he lov'd, often lay sleep-  
less and dissatisfied at night,

Who knew too well the sick, sick dread lest the one he  
 lov'd might secretly be indifferent to him,  
 Whose happiest days were far away, through fields, in  
 woods, on hills, he and another, wandering hand  
 in hand, they twain, apart from other men,  
 Who oft as he saunter'd the streets, curv'd with his  
 arm the shoulder of his friend—while the arm  
 of his friend rested upon him also.

---

### WHEN I HEARD AT THE CLOSE OF THE DAY.

WHEN I heard at the close of the day how my name  
 had been receiv'd with plaudits in the capitol,  
 still it was not a happy night for me that fol-  
 low'd ;  
 And else, when I carous'd, or when my plans were  
 accomplish'd, still I was not happy ;  
 But the day when I rose at dawn from the bed of per-  
 fect health, refresh'd, singing, inhaling the ripe  
 breath of autumn,  
 When I saw the full moon in the west grow pale and  
 disappear in the morning light,  
 When I wander'd alone over the beach, and undress-  
 ing, bathed, laughing with the cool waters, and  
 saw the sun rise,  
 And when I thought how my dear friend, my lover, was  
 on his way coming, O then I was happy ;  
 O then each breath tasted sweeter—and all that day my  
 food nourish'd me more—and the beautiful day  
 pass'd well,  
 And the next came with equal joy—and with the next,  
 at evening, came my friend ;  
 And that night, while all was still, I heard the waters  
 roll slowly continually up the shores,  
 I heard the hissing rustle of the liquid and sands, as  
 directed to me, whispering, to congratulate me,

For the one I love most lay sleeping by me under the  
same cover in the cool night,  
In the stillness, in the autumn moonbeams, his face was  
inclined toward me,  
And his arm lay lightly around my breast—and that  
night I was happy.



### Are You the New Person drawn toward Me?

ARE you the new person drawn toward me?  
To begin with, take warning—I am surely far different  
from what you suppose ;  
Do you suppose you will find in me your ideal ?  
Do you think it so easy to have me become your lover ?  
Do you think the friendship of me would be unalloy'd  
satisfaction ?  
Do you think I am trusty and faithful ?  
Do you see no further than this façade—this smooth  
and tolerant manner of me ?  
Do you suppose yourself advancing on real ground to-  
ward a real heroic man ?  
Have you no thought, O dreamer, that it may be all  
maya, illusion ?



### Roots and Leaves Themselves Alone.

Roots and leaves themselves alone are these ;  
Scents brought to men and women from the wild woods,  
and from the pond-side,  
Breast-sorrel and pinks of love—fingers that wind  
around tighter than vines,  
Gushes from the throats of birds, hid in the foliage of  
trees, as the sun is risen ;

Breezes of land and love—breezes set from living  
shores out to you on the living sea—to you, O  
sailors!

Frost-mellow'd berries, and Third-month twigs, offer'd  
fresh to young persons wandering out in the  
fields when the winter breaks up,

Love-buds, put before you and within you, whoever you  
are,

Buds to be unfolded on the old terms ;

If you bring the warmth of the sun to them, they will  
open, and bring form, color, perfume, to you ;

If you become the aliment and the wet, they will become  
flowers, fruits, tall branches and trees.



## Not Heat Flames up and Consumes.

Nor heat flames up and consumes,

Not sea-waves hurry in and out,

Not the air, delicious and dry, the air of the ripe sum-  
mer, bears lightly along white down-balls of  
myriads of seeds,

Wafted, sailing gracefully, to drop where they may ;

Not these—O none of these, more than the flames of  
me, consuming, burning for his love whom I love!

O none, more than I, hurrying in and out :

—Does the tide hurry, seeking something, and never  
give up? O I the same ;

O nor down-balls, nor perfumes, nor the high, rain-  
emitting clouds, are borne through the open air,

Any more than my Soul is borne through the open  
air,

Wafted in all directions, O love, for friendship, for  
you.

## Trickle, Drops.

TRICKLE, drops! my blue veins leaving!  
O drops of me! trickle, slow drops,  
Candid, from me falling—drip, bleeding drops,  
From wounds made to free you whence you were  
    prison'd,  
From my face—from my forehead and lips,  
From my breast—from within where I was conceal'd—  
    press forth, red drops—confession drops;  
Stain every page—stain every song I sing, every word  
    I say, bloody drops;  
Let them know your scarlet heat—let them glisten;  
Saturate them with yourself, all ashamed and wet;  
Glow upon all I have written, or shall write, bleeding  
    drops;  
Let it all be seen in your light, blushing drops.

---

## City of Orgies.

CITY of orgies, walks and joys!  
City whom that I have lived and sung in your midst  
    will one day make you illustrious,  
Not the pageants of you—not your shifting tableaux,  
    your spectacles, repay me;  
Not the interminable rows of your houses—nor the  
    ships at the wharves,  
Nor the processions in the streets, nor the bright win-  
    dows, with goods in them;  
Nor to converse with learn'd persons, or bear my share  
    in the soiree or feast;  
Not those—but, as I pass, O Manhattan! your frequent  
    and swift flash of eyes offering me love,  
Offering response to my own—these repay me;  
Lovers, continual lovers, only repay me.



### Behold this Swarthy Face.

BEHOLD this swarthy face—these gray eyes,  
This beard—the white wool, unclipt upon my neck,  
My brown hands, and the silent manner of me, without  
charm ;

Yet comes one, a Manhattanese, and ever at parting,  
kisses me lightly on the lips with robust love,  
And I, on the crossing of the street, or on the ship's  
deck, give a kiss in return ;

We observe that salute of American comrades, land and  
sea,

We are those two natural and nonchalant persons.



### I saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing.

I SAW in Louisiana a live-oak growing,  
All alone stood it, and the moss hung down from the  
branches ;

Without any companion it grew there, uttering joyous  
leaves of dark green,

And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of  
myself ;

But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves, stand-  
ing alone there, without its friend, its lover near  
—for I knew I could not ;

And I broke off a twig with a certain number of leaves  
upon it, and twined around it a little moss,

And brought it away—and I have placed it in sight in  
my room ;

It is not needed to remind me as of my own dear friends,  
(For I believe lately I think of little else than of them ;)

Yet it remains to me a curious token—it makes me  
think of manly love ;

For all that, and though the live-oak glistens there in  
Louisiana, solitary, in a wide flat space,

Uttering joyous leaves all its life, without a friend, a  
lover, near,

I know very well I could not.

## TO A STRANGER.

PASSING stranger! you do not know how longingly I  
look upon you,  
You must be he I was seeking, or she I was seeking, (it  
comes to me, as of a dream,)  
I have somewhere surely lived a life of joy with you,  
All is recall'd as we flit by each other, fluid, affectionate,  
chaste, matured,  
You grew up with me, were a boy with me, or a girl  
with me,  
I ate with you, and slept with you—your body has be-  
come not yours only, nor left my body mine only,  
You give me the pleasure of your eyes, face, flesh, as  
we pass—you take of my beard, breast, hands,  
in return,  
I am not to speak to you—I am to think of you when I  
sit alone, or wake at night alone,  
I am to wait—I do not doubt I am to meet you again,  
I am to see to it that I do not lose you.

---

## This Moment, Yearning and Thoughtful.

THIS moment yearning and thoughtful, sitting alone,  
It seems to me there are other men in other lands,  
yearning and thoughtful ;  
It seems to me I can look over and behold them, in  
Germany, Italy, France, Spain—or far, far away,  
in China, or in Russia or India—talking other  
dialects ;  
And it seems to me if I could know those men, I should  
become attached to them, as I do to men in my  
own lands ;  
O I know we should be brethren and lovers,  
I know I should be happy with them.

## I Hear it was Charged Against Me.

I HEAR it was charged against me that I sought to destroy institutions ;  
But really I am neither for nor against institutions ;  
(What indeed have I in common with them?—Or what with the destruction of them?)  
Only I will establish in the Mannahatta, and in every city of These States, inland and seaboard,  
And in the fields and woods, and above every keel, little or large, that dents the water,  
Without edifices, or rules, or trustees, or any argument,  
The institution of the dear love of comrades.

---

## The Prairie-Grass Dividing.

THE prairie-grass dividing—its special odor breathing,  
I demand of it the spiritual corresponding,  
Demand the most copious and close companionship of men,  
Demand the blades to rise of words, acts, beings,  
Those of the open atmosphere, coarse, sunlit, fresh, nutritious,  
Those that go their own gait, erect, stepping with freedom and command—leading, not following,  
Those with a never-quell'd audacity—those with sweet and lusty flesh, clear of taint,  
Those that look carelessly in the faces of Presidents and Governors, as to say, *Who are you?*  
Those of earth-born passion, simple, never-constrain'd, never obedient,  
Those of inland America.

## We Two Boys Together Clinging.

WE two boys together clinging,  
One the other never leaving,  
Up and down the roads going—North and South excursions making,  
Power enjoying—elbows stretching—fingers clutching,  
Arm'd and fearless—eating, drinking, sleeping, loving,  
No law less than ourselves owning—sailing, soldiering,  
thieving, threatening,  
Misers, menials, priests alarming—air breathing, water  
drinking, on the turf or the sea-beach dancing,  
Cities wrenching, ease scorning, statutes mocking, feebleness chasing,  
Fulfilling our foray.

---

## A PROMISE TO CALIFORNIA.

A PROMISE to California,  
Also to the great Pastoral Plains, and for Oregon :  
Sojourning east a while longer, soon I travel toward  
you, to remain, to teach robust American love ;  
For I know very well that I and robust love belong  
among you, inland, and along the Western Sea ;  
For These States tend inland, and toward the Western  
Sea—and I will also.

---

## HERE THE FRAILEST LEAVES OF ME.

HERE the frailest leaves of me, and yet my strongest-  
lasting :  
Here I shade and hide my thoughts—I myself do not  
expose them,  
And yet they expose me more than all my other poems.

## When I Peruse the Conquer'd Fame.

WHEN I peruse the conquer'd fame of heroes, and the  
 victories of mighty generals, I do not envy the  
 generals,  
 Nor the President in his Presidency, nor the rich in his  
 great house ;  
 But when I hear of the brotherhood of lovers, how it  
 was with them,  
 How through life, through dangers, odium, unchanging,  
 long and long,  
 Through youth, and through middle and old age, how  
 unfaltering, how affectionate and faithful they  
 were,  
 Then I am pensive—I hastily walk away, fill'd with the  
 bitterest envy.



## WHAT THINK YOU I TAKE MY PEN IN HAND ?

WHAT think you I take my pen in hand to record ?  
 The battle-ship, perfect-model'd, majestic, that I saw  
 pass the offing to-day under full sail ?  
 The splendors of the past day ? Or the splendor of the  
 night that envelops me ?  
 Or the vaunted glory and growth of the great city  
 spread around me ?—No ;  
 But I record of two simple men I saw to-day, on the  
 pier, in the midst of the crowd, parting the part-  
 ing of dear friends ;  
 The one to remain hung on the other's neck, and pas-  
 sionately kiss'd him,  
 While the one to depart, tightly prest the one to remain  
 in his arms.



## A GLIMPSE.

A GLIMPSE, through an interstice caught,  
Of a crowd of workmen and drivers in a bar-room,  
    around the stove, late of a winter night—And I  
    unremark'd, seated in a corner ;  
Of a youth who loves me, and whom I love, silently ap-  
    proaching, and seating himself near, that he may  
    hold me by the hand ;  
A long while, amid the noises of coming and going—of  
    drinking and oath and smutty jest,  
There we two, content, happy in being together, speak-  
    ing little, perhaps not a word.

---

## NO LABOR-SAVING MACHINE.

No labor-saving machine,  
Nor discovery have I made ;  
Nor will I be able to leave behind me any wealthy be-  
    quest to found a hospital or library,  
Nor reminiscence of any deed of courage, for America,  
Nor literary success, nor intellect—nor book for the  
    book-shelf ;  
Only a few carols, vibrating through the air, I leave,  
For comrades and lovers.

---

## A LEAF FOR HAND IN HAND.

A LEAF for hand in hand !  
You natural persons old and young !  
You on the Mississippi, and on all the branches and  
    bayous of the Mississippi !  
You friendly boatmen and mechanics ! You roughs !  
You twain ! And all processions moving along the  
    streets !  
I wish to infuse myself among you till I see it com-  
    mon for you to walk hand in hand !

## TO THE EAST AND TO THE WEST.

To the East and to the West ;  
 To the man of the Seaside State, and of Pennsylvania,  
 To the Kanadian of the North—to the Southerner I  
     love ;  
 These, with perfect trust, to depict you as myself—  
     the germs are in all men ;  
 I believe the main purport of These States is to found  
     a superb friendship, exalté, previously unknown,  
 Because I perceive it waits, and has been always wait-  
     ing, latent in all men.

---

## EARTH! MY LIKENESS!

EARTH! my likeness!  
 Though you look so impassive, ample and spheric  
     there,  
 I now suspect that is not all ;  
 I now suspect there is something fierce in you, eligible  
     to burst forth ;  
 For an athlete is enamour'd of me—and I of him ;  
 But toward him there is something fierce and terrible  
     in me, eligible to burst forth,  
 I dare not tell it in words—not even in these songs.

---

## I DREAM'D IN A DREAM.

I DREAM'D in a dream, I saw a city invincible to the  
     attacks of the whole of the rest of the earth ;  
 I dream'd that was the new City of Friends ;  
 Nothing was greater there than the quality of robust  
     love—it led the rest ;  
 It was seen every hour in the actions of the men of  
     that city,  
 And in all their looks and words.

## FAST ANCHOR'D, ETERNAL, O LOVE!

FAST-ANCHOR'D, eternal, O love! O woman I love!  
O bride! O wife! more resistless than I can tell, the  
thought of you!  
—Then separate, as disembodied, or another born,  
Ethereal, the last athletic reality, my consolation;  
I ascend—I float in the regions of your love, O man,  
O sharer of my roving life.

---

## Sometimes with One I Love.

SOMETIMES with one I love, I fill myself with rage, for  
fear I effuse unreturn'd love;  
But now I think there is no unreturn'd love—the pay  
is certain, one way or another;  
(I loved a certain person ardently, and my love was  
not return'd;  
Yet out of that, I have written these songs.)

---

## That Shadow, my Likeness.

THAT shadow, my likeness, that goes to and fro, seek-  
ing a livelihood, chattering, chaffering;  
How often I find myself standing and looking at it  
where it flits;  
How often I question and doubt whether that is really  
me;  
—But in these, and among my lovers, and caroling my  
songs,  
O I never doubt whether that is really me.

## AMONG THE MULTITUDE.

<sup>1</sup> AMONG the men and women, the multitude,  
I perceive one picking me out by secret and divine  
signs,  
Acknowledging none else—not parent, wife, husband,  
brother, child, any nearer than I am ;  
Some are baffled—But that one is not—that one knows  
me.

<sup>2</sup> Ah, lover and perfect equal !  
I meant that you should discover me so, by my faint  
indirections ;  
And I, when I meet you, mean to discover you by the  
like in you.

---

## TO A WESTERN BOY.

O BOY of the West !  
To you many things to absorb, I teach, to help you  
become eleve of mine :  
Yet if blood like mine circle not in your veins ;  
If you be not silently selected by lovers, and do not  
silently select lovers,  
Of what use is it that you seek to become eleve of mine ?

---

## O YOU WHOM I OFTEN AND SILENTLY COME.

O YOU whom I often and silently come where you are,  
that I may be with you ;  
As I walk by your side, or sit near, or remain in the  
same room with you,  
Little you know the subtle electric fire that for your  
sake is playing within me.

## Full of Life, Now.

<sup>1</sup> FULL of life, now, compact, visible,  
I, forty years old the Eighty-third Year of The States,  
To one a century hence, or any number of centuries  
hence,  
To you, yet unborn, these, seeking you.

<sup>2</sup> When you read these, I, that was visible, am become  
invisible ;  
Now it is you, compact, visible, realizing my poems,  
seeking me ;  
Fancying how happy you were, if I could be with you,  
and become your comrade ;  
Be it as if I were with you. (Be not too certain but I  
am now with you.)



# SALUT AU MONDE !



## 1

<sup>1</sup> O TAKE my hand, Walt Whitman !  
Such gliding wonders ! such sights and sounds !  
Such join'd unended links, each hook'd to the next !  
Each answering all—each sharing the earth with all.

<sup>2</sup> What widens within you, Walt Whitman ?  
What waves and soils exuding ?  
What climes ? what persons and lands are here ?  
Who are the infants ? some playing, some slumbering ?  
Who are the girls ? who are the married women ?  
Who are the groups of old men going slowly with their  
arms about each other's necks ?  
What rivers are these ? what forests and fruits are  
these ?  
What are the mountains call'd that rise so high in the  
mists ?  
What myriads of dwellings are they, fill'd with dwellers ?

## 2

<sup>3</sup> Within me latitude widens, longitude lengthens ;  
Asia, Africa, Europe, are to the east—America is pro-  
vided for in the west ;  
Banding the bulge of the earth winds the hot equator,  
Curiously north and south turn the axis-ends ;  
Within me is the longest day—the sun wheels in slant-  
ing rings—it does not set for months ;

Stretch'd in due time within me the midnight sun just  
rises above the horizon, and sinks again ;  
Within me zones, seas, cataracts, plants, volcanoes,  
groups,  
Malaysia, Polynesia, and the great West Indian islands.

## 3

<sup>4</sup> What do you hear, Walt Whitman ?

<sup>5</sup> I hear the workman singing, and the farmer's wife  
singing ;  
I hear in the distance the sounds of children, and of  
animals early in the day ;  
I hear quick rifle-cracks from the riflemen of East Ten-  
nessee and Kentucky, hunting on hills ;  
I hear emulous shouts of Australians, pursuing the wild  
horse ;  
I hear the Spanish dance, with castanets, in the chestnut  
shade, to the rebeck and guitar ;  
I hear continual echoes from the Thames ;  
I hear fierce French liberty songs ;  
I hear of the Italian boat-sculler the musical recitative  
of old poems ;  
I hear the Virginia plantation-chorus of negroes, of a  
harvest night, in the glare of pine-knots ;  
I hear the strong baritone of the 'long-shore-men of  
Mannahatta ;  
I hear the stevedores unlading the cargoes, and singing ;  
I hear the screams of the water-fowl of solitary north-  
west lakes ;  
I hear the rustling pattering of locusts, as they strike  
the grain and grass with the showers of their  
terrible clouds ;  
I hear the Coptic refrain, toward sundown, pensively  
falling on the breast of the black venerable vast  
mother, the Nile ;  
I hear the bugles of raft-tenders on the streams of  
Kanada ;  
I hear the chirp of the Mexican muleteer, and the  
bells of the mule ;

- I hear the Arab muezzin, calling from the top of the mosque ;  
 I hear the Christian priests at the altars of their churches—I hear the responsive base and soprano ;  
 I hear the wail of utter despair of the white-hair'd Irish grand-parents, when they learn the death of their grandson ;  
 I hear the cry of the Cossack, and the sailor's voice, putting to sea at Okotsk ;  
 I hear the wheeze of the slave-coffle, as the slaves march on—as the husky gangs pass on by twos and threes, fasten'd together with wrist-chains and ankle-chains ;  
 I hear the entreaties of women tied up for punishment—I hear the sibilant whisk of thongs through the air ;  
 I hear the Hebrew reading his records and psalms ;  
 I hear the rhythmic myths of the Greeks, and the strong legends of the Romans ;  
 I hear the tale of the divine life and bloody death of the beautiful God—the Christ ;  
 I hear the Hindoo teaching his favorite pupil the loves, wars, adages, transmitted safely to this day, from poets who wrote three thousand years ago.

## 4

<sup>6</sup> What do you see, Walt Whitman ?

Who are they you salute, and that one after another salute you ?

- <sup>7</sup> I see a great round wonder rolling through the air ;  
 I see diminute farms, hamlets, ruins, grave-yards, jails, factories, palaces, hovels, huts of barbarians, tents of nomads, upon the surface ;  
 I see the shaded part on one side, where the sleepers are sleeping—and the sun-lit part on the other side,  
 I see the curious silent change of the light and shade,

I see distant lands, as real and near to the inhabitants  
of them, as my land is to me.

<sup>8</sup> I see plenteous waters ;

I see mountain peaks—I see the sierras of Andes and  
Alleghanies, where they range ;

I see plainly the Himalayas, Chian Shahs, Altays,  
Ghauts ;

I see the giant pinnacles of Elbruz, Kazbek, Bazardjusi,

I see the Rocky Mountains, and the Peak of Winds ;

I see the Styrian Alps, and the Karnac Alps ;

I see the Pyrenees, Balks, Carpathians—and to the  
north the Dofrafields, and off at sea Mount  
Hecla ;

I see Vesuvius and Etna—I see the Anahuacs ;

I see the Mountains of the Moon, and the Snow  
Mountains, and the Red Mountains of Mada-  
gascar ;

I see the Vermont hills, and the long string of Cor-  
dilleras ;

I see the vast deserts of Western America ;

I see the Lybian, Arabian, and Asiatic deserts ;

I see huge dreadful Arctic and Antarctic icebergs ;

I see the superior oceans and the inferior ones—the  
Atlantic and Pacific, the sea of Mexico, the  
Brazilian sea, and the sea of Peru,

The Japan waters, those of Hindostan, the China Sea,  
and the Gulf of Guinea,

The spread of the Baltic, Caspian, Bothnia, the British  
shores, and the Bay of Biscay,

The clear-sunn'd Mediterranean, and from one to an-  
other of its islands,

The inland fresh-tasted seas of North America,

The White Sea, and the sea around Greenland.

<sup>9</sup> I behold the mariners of the world ;

Some are in storms—some in the night, with the  
watch on the look-out ;

Some drifting helplessly—some with contagious dis-  
eases.

<sup>10</sup> I behold the sail and steamships of the world, some  
in clusters in port, some on their voyages ;  
Some double the Cape of Storms—some Cape Verde,  
—others Cape Guardafui, Bon, or Bajadore ;  
Others Dondra Head—others pass the Straits of Sunda—others Cape Lopatka—others Behring's Straits ;  
Others Cape Horn—others sail the Gulf of Mexico, or along Cuba or Hayti—others Hudson's Bay or Baffin's Bay ;  
Others pass the Straits of Dover—others enter the Wash—others the Firth of Solway—others round Cape Clear—others the Land's End ;  
Others traverse the Zuyder Zee, or the Scheld ;  
Others add to the exits and entrances at Sandy Hook ;  
Others to the comers and goers at Gibraltar, or the Dardanelles ;  
Others sternly push their way through the northern winter-packs ;  
Others descend or ascend the Obi or the Lena ;  
Others the Niger or the Congo—others the Indus, the Burampooter and Cambodia ;  
Others wait at the wharves of Manhattan, steam'd up, ready to start ;  
Wait, swift and swarthy, in the ports of Australia ;  
Wait at Liverpool, Glasgow, Dublin, Marseilles, Lisbon, Naples, Hamburg, Bremen, Bordeaux, the Hague, Copenhagen ;  
Wait at Valparaiso, Rio Janeiro, Panama ;  
Wait at their moorings at Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, New Orleans, Galveston, San Francisco.

## 5

<sup>11</sup> I see the tracks of the rail-roads of the earth ;  
I see them welding State to State, city to city, through North America ;  
I see them in Great Britain, I see them in Europe ;  
I see them in Asia and in Africa.



<sup>12</sup> I see the electric telegraphs of the earth ;  
I see the filaments of the news of the wars, deaths,  
losses, gains, passions, of my race.

<sup>13</sup> I see the long river-stripes of the earth ;  
I see where the Mississippi flows—I see where the Columbia flows ;  
I see the Great River, and the Falls of Niagara ;  
I see the Amazon and the Paraguay ;  
I see the four great rivers of China, the Amour, the Yellow River, the Yiang-tse, and the Pearl ;  
I see where the Seine flows, and where the Danube, the Loire, the Rhone, and the Guadalquiver flow ;  
I see the windings of the Volga, the Dnieper, the Oder ;  
I see the Tuscan going down the Arno, and the Venetian along the Po ;  
I see the Greek seaman sailing out of Egina bay.

## 6

<sup>14</sup> I see the site of the old empire of Assyria, and that of Persia, and that of India ;  
I see the falling of the Ganges over the high rim of Saukara.

<sup>15</sup> I see the place of the idea of the Deity incarnated by avatars in human forms ;  
I see the spots of the successions of priests on the earth—  
—oracles, sacrificers, brahmins, sabians, lamas, monks, muftis, exhorters ;  
I see where druids walked the groves of Mona—I see the mistletoe and vervain ;  
I see the temples of the deaths of the bodies of Gods—  
I see the old signifiers.

<sup>16</sup> I see Christ once more eating the bread of his last supper, in the midst of youths and old persons ;  
I see where the strong divine young man, the Hercules, toil'd faithfully and long, and then died ;

I see the place of the innocent rich life and hapless fate  
of the beautiful nocturnal son, the full-limb'd  
Bacchus ;

I see Kneph, blooming, drest in blue, with the crown  
of feathers on his head ;

I see Hermes, unsuspected, dying, well-beloved, saying  
to the people, *Do not weep for me,*

*This is not my true country, I have lived banish'd from  
my true country—I now go back there,*

*I return to the celestial sphere, where every one goes in his  
turn.*

## 7

<sup>17</sup> I see the battle-fields of the earth—grass grows upon  
them, and blossoms and corn ;

I see the tracks of ancient and modern expeditions.

<sup>18</sup> I see the nameless masonries, venerable messages of  
the unknown events, heroes, records of the earth.

<sup>19</sup> I see the places of the sagas ;

I see pine-trees and fir-trees torn by northern blasts ;

I see granite boulders and cliffs—I see green meadows  
and lakes ;

I see the burial-cairns of Scandinavian warriors ;

I see them raised high with stones, by the marge of  
restless oceans, that the dead men's spirits, when  
they wearied of their quiet graves, might rise up  
through the mounds, and gaze on the tossing bil-  
lows, and be refresh'd by storms, immensity, lib-  
erty, action.

<sup>20</sup> I see the steppes of Asia ;

I see the tumuli of Mongolia—I see the tents of Kal-  
mucks and Baskirs ;

I see the nomadic tribes, with herds of oxen and cows ;

I see the table-lands notch'd with ravines—I see the  
jungles and deserts ;

I see the camel, the wild steed, the bustard, the fat-  
tail'd sheep, the antelope, and the burrowing  
wolf.

<sup>21</sup> I see the high-lands of Abyssinia ;  
I see flocks of goats feeding, and see the fig-tree, tamarind, date,  
And see fields of teff-wheat, and see the places of verdure and gold.

<sup>22</sup> I see the Brazilian vaquero ;  
I see the Bolivian ascending Mount Sorata ;  
I see the Wacho crossing the plains—I see the incomparable rider of horses with his lasso on his arm ;  
I see over the pampas the pursuit of wild cattle for their hides.

## 8

<sup>23</sup> I see little and large sea-dots, some inhabited, some uninhabited ;  
I see two boats with nets, lying off the shore of Pamanok, quite still ;  
I see ten fishermen waiting—they discover now a thick school of mossbonkers—they drop the join'd seine-ends in the water,  
The boats separate—they diverge and row off, each on its rounding course to the beach, enclosing the mossbonkers ;  
The net is drawn in by a windlass by those who stop ashore,  
Some of the fishermen lounge in their boats—others stand negligently ankle-deep in the water, pois'd on strong legs ;  
The boats are partly drawn up—the water slaps against them ;  
On the sand, in heaps and winrows, well out from the water, lie the green-back'd spotted mossbonkers.

## 9

<sup>24</sup> I see the despondent red man in the west, lingering about the banks of Moingo, and about Lake Pepin ;

He has heard the quail and beheld the honey-bee, and  
sadly prepared to depart.

<sup>25</sup> I see the regions of snow and ice ;  
I see the sharp-eyed Samoiede and the Finn ;  
I see the seal-seeker in his boat, poisoning his lance ;  
I see the Siberian on his slight-built sledge, drawn by  
dogs ;  
I see the porpoise-hunters—I see the whale-crews of  
the South Pacific and the North Atlantic ;  
I see the cliffs, glaciers, torrents, valleys, of Switzerland  
—I mark the long winters, and the isolation.

<sup>26</sup> I see the cities of the earth, and make myself at ran-  
dom a part of them ;  
I am a real Parisian ;  
I am a habitan of Vienna, St. Petersburg, Berlin, Con-  
stantinople ;  
I am of Adelaide, Sidney, Melbourne ;  
I am of London, Manchester, Bristol, Edinburgh, Lim-  
erick ;  
I am of Madrid, Cadiz, Barcelona, Oporto, Lyons, Brus-  
sels, Berne, Frankfort, Stuttgart, Turin, Florence ;  
I belong in Moscow, Cracow, Warsaw—or northward  
in Christiania or Stockholm—or in Siberian  
Irkutsk—or in some street in Iceland ;  
I descend upon all those cities, and rise from them  
again.

## 10

<sup>27</sup> I see vapors exhaling from unexplored countries ;  
I see the savage types, the bow and arrow, the poison'd  
splint, the fetish, and the obi.

<sup>28</sup> I see African and Asiatic towns ;  
I see Algiers, Tripoli, Derne, Mogadore, Timbuctoo,  
Monrovia ;  
I see the swarms of Pekin, Canton, Benares, Delhi,  
Calcutta, Yedo ;  
I see the Kruman in his hut, and the Dahoman and  
Ashantee-man in their huts ;

I see the Turk smoking opium in Aleppo ;  
I see the picturesque crowds at the fairs of Khiva, and  
those of Herat ;  
I see Teheran—I see Muscat and Medina, and the inter-  
vening sands—I see the caravans toiling onward ;  
I see Egypt and the Egyptians—I see the pyramids and  
obelisks ;  
I look on chisel'd histories, songs, philosophies, cut in  
slabs of sand-stone, or on granite-blocks ;  
I see at Memphis mummy-pits, containing mummies,  
embalm'd, swathed in linen cloth, lying there  
many centuries ;  
I look on the fall'n Theban, the large-ball'd eyes, the  
side-drooping neck, the hands folded across the  
breast.

<sup>29</sup> I see the menials of the earth, laboring ;  
I see the prisoners in the prisons ;  
I see the defective human bodies of the earth ;  
I see the blind, the deaf and dumb, idiots, hunchbacks,  
lunatics ;  
I see the pirates, thieves, betrayers, murderers, slave-  
makers of the earth ;  
I see the helpless infants, and the helpless old men and  
women.

<sup>30</sup> I see male and female everywhere ;  
I see the serene brotherhood of philosophs ;  
I see the constructiveness of my race ;  
I see the results of the perseverance and industry of  
my race ;  
I see ranks, colors, barbarisms, civilizations—I go  
among them—I mix indiscriminately,  
And I salute all the inhabitants of the earth.

## 11

<sup>31</sup> You, whoever you are !  
You daughter or son of England !  
You of the mighty Slavic tribes and empires ! you Russ  
in Russia !



You dim-descended, black, divine-soul'd African, large,  
fine-headed, nobly-form'd, superbly destin'd, on  
equal terms with me!

You Norwegian! Swede! Dane! Iceland! you Prus-  
sian!

You Spaniard of Spain! you Portuguese!

You Frenchwoman and Frenchman of France!

You Belge! you liberty-lover of the Netherlands!

You sturdy Austrian! you Lombard! Hun! Bohemian!  
farmer of Styria!

You neighbor of the Danube!

You working-man of the Rhine, the Elbe, or the Weser!  
you working-woman too!

You Sardinian! you Bavarian! Swabian! Saxon! Wal-  
lachian! Bulgarian!

You citizen of Prague! Roman! Neapolitan! Greek!

You lithe matador in the arena at Seville!

You mountaineer living lawlessly on the Taurus or  
Caucasus!

You Bokh horse-herd, watching your mares and stal-  
lions feeding!

You beautiful-bodied Persian, at full speed in the sad-  
dle, shooting arrows to the mark!

You Chinaman and Chinawoman of China! you Tartar  
of Tartary!

You women of the earth subordinated at your tasks!

You Jew journeying in your old age through every risk,  
to stand once on Syrian ground!

You other Jews waiting in all lands for your Messiah!

You thoughtful Armenian, pondering by some stream  
of the Euphrates! you peering amid the ruins  
of Ninevah! you ascending Mount Ararat!

You foot-worn pilgrim welcoming the far-away sparkle  
of the minarets of Mecca!

You sheiks along the stretch from Suez to Bab-el-man-  
deb, ruling your families and tribes!

You olive-grower tending your fruit on fields of Naz-  
areth, Damascus, or Lake Tiberias!

You Thibet trader on the wide inland, or bargaining  
in the shops of Lassa!

You Japanese man or woman! you liver in Madagascar, Ceylon, Sumatra, Borneo!

All you continentals of Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, indifferent of place!

All you on the numberless islands of the archipelagoes of the sea!

And you of centuries hence, when you listen to me!

And you, each and everywhere, whom I specify not, but include just the same!

Health to you! Good will to you all—from me and America sent.

<sup>32</sup> Each of us inevitable;

Each of us limitless—each of us with his or her right upon the earth;

Each of us allow'd the eternal purports of the earth;

Each of us here as divinely as any is here.

## 12

<sup>33</sup> You Hottentot with clicking palate! You woolly-hair'd hordes!

You own'd persons, dropping sweat-drops or blood-drops!

You human forms with the fathomless ever-impressive countenances of brutes!

I dare not refuse you—the scope of the world, and of time and space, are upon me.

<sup>34</sup> You poor koboo whom the meanest of the rest look down upon, for all your glimmering language and spirituality!

You low expiring aborigines of the hills of Utah, Oregon, California!

You dwarf'd Kamtschatkan, Greenlander, Lapp!

You Austral negro, naked, red, sooty, with protrusive lip, grovelling, seeking your food!

You Caffre, Berber, Soudanese!

You haggard, uncouth, untutor'd, Bedowee!

You plague-swarms in Madras, Nankin, Kaubul, Cairo!

You bather bathing in the Ganges!

You benighted roamer of Amazonia ! you Patagonian !  
you Fejee-man !

You peon of Mexico ! you slave of Carolina, Texas,  
Tennessee !

I do not prefer others so very much before you either ;  
I do not say one word against you, away back there,  
where you stand ;

(You will come forward in due time to my side.)

<sup>35</sup> My spirit has pass'd in compassion and determination  
around the whole earth ;

I have look'd for equals and lovers, and found them  
ready for me in all lands ;

I think some divine rapport has equalized me with  
them.

## 13

<sup>36</sup> O vapors ! I think I have risen with you, and moved  
away to distant continents, and fallen down there,  
for reasons ;

I think I have blown with you, O winds ;  
O waters, I have finger'd every shore with you.

<sup>37</sup> I have run through what any river or strait of the  
globe has run through ;

I have taken my stand on the bases of peninsulas, and  
on the high embedded rocks, to cry thence.

<sup>38</sup> *Salut au monde !*

What cities the light or warmth penetrates, I penetrate  
those cities myself ;

All islands to which birds wing their way, I wing my  
way myself.

<sup>39</sup> Toward all,

I raise high the perpendicular hand—I make the signal,  
To remain after me in sight forever,  
For all the haunts and homes of men.

## A CHILD'S AMAZE.

SILENT and amazed, even when a little boy,  
I remember I heard the preacher every Sunday put  
God in his statements,  
As contending against some being or influence.

---

## THE RUNNER.

ON a flat road runs the well-train'd runner ;  
He is lean and sinewy, with muscular legs ;  
He is thinly clothed—he leans forward as he runs,  
With lightly closed fists, and arms partially rais'd.

---

## BEAUTIFUL WOMEN.

WOMEN sit, or move to and fro—some old, some young ;  
The young are beautiful—but the old are more beautiful  
than the young.

---

## MOTHER AND BABE.

I SEE the sleeping babe, nestling the breast of its mother ;  
The sleeping mother and babe—hush'd, I study them  
long and long.

---

## THOUGHT.

OF obedience, faith, adhesiveness ;  
As I stand aloof and look, there is to me something  
profoundly affecting in large masses of men, following  
the lead of those who do not believe in  
men.

## AMERICAN FEUILLAGE.

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AMERICA always !

Always our own feuillage !

Always Florida's green peninsula ! Always the priceless delta of Louisiana ! Always the cotton-fields of Alabama and Texas !

Always California's golden hills and hollows—and the silver mountains of New Mexico ! Always soft-breath'd Cuba !

Always the vast slope drain'd by the Southern Sea—inseparable with the slopes drain'd by the Eastern and Western Seas ;

The area the eighty-third year of These States—the three and a half millions of square miles ;

The eighteen thousand miles of sea-coast and bay-coast on the main—the thirty thousand miles of river navigation,

The seven millions of distinct families, and the same number of dwellings—Always these, and more, branching forth into numberless branches ;

Always the free range and diversity ! always the continent of Democracy !

Always the prairies, pastures, forests, vast cities, travelers, Kanada, the snows ;

Always these compact lands—lands tied at the hips with the belt stringing the huge oval lakes ;

Always the West, with strong native persons—the increasing density there—the habitants, friendly, threatening, ironical, scorning invaders ;

All sights, South, North, East—all deeds, promiscuously done at all times,



All characters, movements, growths—a few noticed,  
myriads unnoticed,  
Through Mannahatta's streets I walking, these things  
gathering ;  
On interior rivers, by night, in the glare of pine knots,  
steamboats wooding up ;  
Sunlight by day on the valley of the Susquehanna, and  
on the valleys of the Potomac and Rappahannock,  
and the valleys of the Roanoke and Delaware ;  
In their northerly wilds, beasts of prey haunting the  
Adirondacks, the hills—or lapping the Saginaw  
waters to drink ;  
In a lonesome inlet, a sheldrake, lost from the flock,  
sitting on the water, rocking silently ;  
In farmers' barns, oxen in the stable, their harvest labor  
done—they rest standing—they are too tired ;  
Afar on arctic ice, the she-walrus lying drowsily, while  
her cubs play around ;  
The hawk sailing where men have not yet sail'd—the  
farthest polar sea, ripply, crystalline, open, be-  
yond the flocs ;  
White drift spooning ahead, where the ship in the tem-  
pest dashes ;  
On solid land, what is done in cities, as the bells all  
strike midnight together ;  
In primitive woods, the sounds there also sounding—  
the howl of the wolf, the scream of the panther,  
and the hoarse bellow of the elk ;  
In winter beneath the hard blue ice of Moosehead Lake  
—in summer visible through the clear waters,  
the great trout swimming ;  
In lower latitudes, in warmer air, in the Carolinas, the  
large black buzzard floating slowly, high beyond  
the tree tops,  
Below, the red cedar, festoon'd with tylandria—the  
pines and cypresses, growing out of the white  
sand that spreads far and flat ;  
Rude boats descending the big Pedee—climbing plants,  
parasites, with color'd flowers and berries, envel-  
oping huge trees,

- The waving drapery on the live oak, trailing long and low, noiselessly waved by the wind ;
- The camp of Georgia wagoners, just after dark—the supper-fires, and the cooking and eating by whites and negroes,
- Thirty or forty great wagons—the mules, cattle, horses, feeding from troughs,
- The shadows, gleams, up under the leaves of the old sycamore-trees—the flames—with the black smoke from the pitch-pine, curling and rising ;
- Southern fishermen fishing—the sounds and inlets of North Carolina's coast—the shad-fishery and the herring-fishery—the large sweep-seines—the windlasses on shore work'd by horses—the clearing, curing, and packing-houses ;
- Deep in the forest, in piney woods, turpentine dropping from the incisions in the trees—There are the turpentine works,
- There are the negroes at work, in good health—the ground in all directions is cover'd with pine straw :
- In Tennessee and Kentucky, slaves busy in the coal-ings, at the forge, by the furnace-blaze, or at the corn-shucking ;
- In Virginia, the planter's son returning after a long absence, joyfully welcom'd and kiss'd by the aged mulatto nurse ;
- On rivers, boatmen safely moor'd at night-fall, in their boats, under shelter of high banks,
- Some of the younger men dance to the sound of the banjo or fiddle—others sit on the gunwale, smoking and talking ;
- Late in the afternoon, the mocking-bird, the American mimic, singing in the Great Dismal Swamp—there are the greenish waters, the resinous odor, the plenteous moss, the cypress tree, and the juniper tree ;
- Northward, young men of Mannahatta—the target company from an excursion returning home at evening—the musket-muzzles all bear bunches of flowers presented by women ;

Children at play—or on his father's lap a young boy  
fallen asleep, (how his lips move ! how he smiles  
in his sleep !)

The scout riding on horseback over the plains west of  
the Mississippi—he ascends a knoll and sweeps  
his eye around ;

California life—the miner, bearded, dress'd in his rude  
costume—the stanch California friendship—the  
sweet air—the graves one, in passing, meets,  
solitary, just aside the horse-path ;

Down in Texas, the cotton-field, the negro-cabins—  
drivers driving mules or oxen before rude carts—  
cotton bales piled on banks and wharves ;

Encircling all, vast-darting, up and wide, the American  
Soul, with equal hemispheres—one Love, one  
Dilation or Pride ;

—In arriere, the peace-talk with the Iroquois, the abo-  
rigines—the calumet, the pipe of good-will, arbi-  
tration, and indorsement,

The sachem blowing the smoke first toward the sun and  
then toward the earth,

The drama of the scalp-dance enacted with painted  
faces and guttural exclamations,

The setting out of the war-party—the long and stealthy  
march,

The single-file—the swinging hatchets—the surprise  
and slaughter of enemies ;

—All the acts, scenes, ways, persons, attitudes of These  
States—reminiscences, all institutions,

All These States, compact—Every square mile of These  
States, without excepting a particle—you also—  
me also,

Me pleas'd, rambling in lanes and country fields, Pau-  
manok's fields,

Me, observing the spiral flight of two little yellow but-  
terflies, shuffling between each other, ascending  
high in the air ;

The darting swallow, the destroyer of insects—the fall  
traveler southward, but returning northward  
early in the spring ;

The country boy at the close of the day, driving the  
herd of cows, and shouting to them as they loiter  
to browse by the road-side ;

The city wharf—Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore,  
Charleston, New Orleans, San Francisco,

The departing ships, when the sailors heave at the  
capstan ;

—Evening—me in my room—the setting sun,

The setting summer sun shining in my open window,  
showing the swarm of flies, suspended, balancing  
in the air in the centre of the room, darting  
athwart, up and down, casting swift shadows in  
specks on the opposite wall, where the shine is ;

The athletic American matron speaking in public to  
crowds of listeners ;

Males, females, immigrants, combinations—the copious-  
ness—the individuality of The States, each for  
itself—the money-makers ;

Factories, machinery, the mechanical forces—the wind-  
lass, lever, pulley—All certainties,

The certainty of space, increase, freedom, futurity,

In space, the sporades, the scatter'd islands, the stars—  
on the firm earth, the lands, my lands ;

O lands! all so dear to me—what you are, (whatever it  
is,) I become a part of that, whatever it is ;

Southward there, I screaming, with wings slow flapping,  
with the myriads of gulls wintering along the  
coasts of Florida—or in Louisiana, with pelicans  
breeding ;

Otherways, there, atwixt the banks of the Arkansaw, the  
Rio Grande, the Nueces, the Brazos, the Tombig-  
bee, the Red River, the Saskatchewan, or the  
Osage, I with the spring waters laughing and  
skipping and running ;

Northward, on the sands, on some shallow bay of Pau-  
manok, I, with parties of snowy herons wading  
in the wet to seek worms and aquatic plants ;

Retreating, triumphantly twittering, the king-bird, from  
piercing the crow with its bill, for amusement—  
And I triumphantly twittering ;



The migrating flock of wild geese alighting in autumn  
to refresh themselves—the body of the flock feed  
—the sentinels outside move around with erect  
heads watching, and are from time to time re-  
liev'd by other sentinels—And I feeding and  
taking turns with the rest ;

In Kanadian forests, the moose, large as an ox, corner'd  
by hunters, rising desperately on his hind-feet,  
and plunging with his fore-feet, the hoofs as  
sharp as knives—And I, plunging at the hunters,  
corner'd and desperate ;

In the Mannahatta, streets, piers, shipping, store-houses,  
and the countless workmen working in the shops,  
And I too of the Mannahatta, singing thereof—and no  
less in myself than the whole of the Mannahatta  
in itself,

Singing the song of These, my ever-united lands—my  
body no more inevitably united, part to part, and  
made one identity, any more than my lands are  
inevitably united, and made ONE IDENTITY ;

Nativities, climates, the grass of the great Pastoral  
Plains ;

Cities, labors, death, animals, products, war, good and  
evil—these me,

These affording, in all their particulars, endless feuil-  
lage to me and to America, how can I do less  
than pass the clew of the union of them, to afford  
the like to you ?

Whoever you are ! how can I but offer you divine leaves,  
that you also be eligible as I am ?

How can I but, as here, chanting, invite you for your-  
self to collect bouquets of the incomparable  
feuillage of These States ?



## SONG OF THE BROAD-AXE.

1

<sup>1</sup> WEAPON, shapely, naked, wan!  
Head from the mother's bowels drawn!  
Wooded flesh and metal bone! limb only one, and lip  
    only one!  
Gray-blue leaf by red-heat grown! helve produced from  
    a little seed sown!  
Resting the grass amid and upon,  
To be lean'd, and to lean on.

<sup>2</sup> Strong shapes, and attributes of strong shapes—mas-  
    culine trades, sights and sounds;  
Long varied train of an emblem, dabs of music;  
Fingers of the organist skipping staccato over the keys  
    of the great organ.

2

<sup>3</sup> Welcome are all earth's lands, each for its kind;  
Welcome are lands of pine and oak;  
Welcome are lands of the lemon and fig;  
Welcome are lands of gold;  
Welcome are lands of wheat and maize—welcome those  
    of the grape;  
Welcome are lands of sugar and rice;  
Welcome the cotton-lands—welcome those of the white  
    potato and sweet potato;  
Welcome are mountains, flats, sands, forests, prairies;

Welcome the rich borders of rivers, table-lands, openings ;

Welcome the measureless grazing-lands—welcome the teeming soil of orchards, flax, honey, hemp ;

Welcome just as much the other more hard-faced lands ;

Lands rich as lands of gold, or wheat and fruit lands ;

Lands of mines, lands of the manly and rugged ores ;

Lands of coal, copper, lead, tin, zinc ;

LANDS OF IRON! lands of the make of the axe!

## 3

<sup>4</sup> The log at the wood-pile, the axe supported by it ;  
The sylvan hut, the vine over the doorway, the space  
clear'd for a garden,

The irregular tapping of rain down on the leaves, after  
the storm is lull'd,

The wailing and moaning at intervals, the thought of  
the sea,

The thought of ships struck in the storm, and put on  
their beam ends, and the cutting away of masts ;

The sentiment of the huge timbers of old-fashion'd  
houses and barns ;

The remember'd print or narrative, the voyage at a  
venture of men, families, goods,

The disembarkation, the founding of a new city,

The voyage of those who sought a New England and  
found it—the outset anywhere,

The settlements of the Arkansas, Colorado, Ottawa,  
Willamette,

The slow progress, the scant fare, the axe, rifle, saddle-  
bags ;

The beauty of all adventurous and daring persons,

The beauty of wood-boys and wood-men, with their  
clear untrimm'd faces,

The beauty of independence, departure, actions that  
rely on themselves,

The American contempt for statutes and ceremonies,  
the boundless impatience of restraint,

The loose drift of character, the inkling through ran-  
dom types, the solidification ;

The butcher in the slaughter-house, the hands aboard  
schooners and sloops, the raftsmen, the pioneer,  
Lumbermen in their winter camp, day-break in the  
woods, stripes of snow on the limbs of trees, the  
occasional snapping,

The glad clear sound of one's own voice, the merry  
song, the natural life of the woods, the strong  
day's work,

The blazing fire at night, the sweet taste of supper, the  
talk, the bed of hemlock boughs, and the bear-  
skin ;

—The house-builder at work in cities or anywhere,

The preparatory jointing, squaring, sawing, mortising,  
The hoist-up of beams, the push of them in their places,  
laying them regular,

Setting the studs by their tenons in the mortises, accord-  
ing as they were prepared,

The blows of mallets and hammers, the attitudes of the  
men, their curv'd limbs,

Bending, standing, astride the beams, driving in pins,  
holding on by posts and braces,

The hook'd arm over the plate, the other arm wielding  
the axe,

The floor-men forcing the planks close, to be nail'd,

Their postures bringing their weapons downward on  
the bearers,

The echoes resounding through the vacant building ;

The huge store-house carried up in the city, well under  
way,

The six framing-men, two in the middle, and two at  
each end, carefully bearing on their shoulders a  
heavy stick for a cross-beam,

The crowded line of masons with trowels in their right  
hands, rapidly laying the long side-wall, two  
hundred feet from front to rear,

The flexible rise and fall of backs, the continual click  
of the trowels striking the bricks,

The bricks, one after another, each laid so workman-  
like in its place, and set with a knock of the  
trowel-handle,

The piles of materials, the mortar on the mortar-boards,  
and the steady replenishing by the hod-men ;  
—Spar-makers in the spar-yard, the swarming row of  
well-grown apprentices,  
The swing of their axes on the square-hew'd log,  
shaping it toward the shape of a mast,  
The brisk short crackle of the steel driven slantingly  
into the pine,  
The butter-color'd chips flying off in great flakes and  
slivers,  
The limber motion of brawny young arms and hips in  
easy costumes ;  
The constructor of wharves, bridges, piers, bulk-heads,  
floats, stays against the sea ;  
—The city fireman—the fire that suddenly bursts forth  
in the close-pack'd square,  
The arriving engines, the hoarse shouts, the nimble  
stepping and daring,  
The strong command through the fire-trumpets, the  
falling in line, the rise and fall of the arms  
forcing the water,  
The slender, spasmodic, blue-white jets—the bringing  
to bear of the hooks and ladders, and their  
execution,  
The crash and cut away of connecting wood-work, or  
through floors, if the fire smoulders under them,  
The crowd with their lit faces, watching—the glare  
and dense shadows ;  
—The forger at his forge-furnace, and the user of iron  
after him,  
The maker of the axe large and small, and the welder  
and temperer,  
The chooser breathing his breath on the cold steel,  
and trying the edge with his thumb,  
The one who clean-shapes the handle, and sets it firmly  
in the socket ;  
The shadowy processions of the portraits of the past  
users also,  
The primal patient mechanics, the architects and en-  
gineers,  
The far-off Assyrian edifice and Mizra edifice,

The Roman lictors preceding the consuls,  
 The antique European warrior with his axe in combat,  
 The uplifted arm, the clatter of blows on the helmeted  
     head,  
 The death-howl, the limpsey tumbling body, the rush  
     of friend and foe thither,  
 The siege of revolted lieges determin'd for liberty,  
 The summons to surrender, the battering at castle gates,  
     the truce and parley ;  
 The sack of an old city in its time,  
 The bursting in of mercenaries and bigots tumultuously  
     and disorderly,  
 Roar, flames, blood, drunkenness, madness,  
 Goods freely rifled from houses and temples, screams of  
     women in the gripe of brigands,  
 Craft and thievery of camp-followers, men running, old  
     persons despairing,  
 The hell of war, the cruelties of creeds,  
 The list of all executive deeds and words, just or unjust,  
 The power of personality, just or unjust.

## 4

<sup>5</sup> Muscle and pluck forever !  
 What invigorates life, invigorates death,  
 And the dead advance as much as the living advance,  
 And the future is no more uncertain than the present,  
 And the roughness of the earth and of man encloses as  
     much as the delicatessen of the earth and of man,  
 And nothing endures but personal qualities.

<sup>6</sup> What do you think endures ?  
 Do you think the great city endures ?  
 Or a teeming manufacturing state ? or a prepared con-  
     stitution ? or the best built steamships ?  
 Or hotels of granite and iron ? or any chef-d'œuvres of  
     engineering, forts, armaments ?

<sup>7</sup> Away ! These are not to be cherish'd for themselves ;  
 They fill their hour, the dancers dance, the musicians  
     play for them ;



The show passes, all does well enough of course,  
All does very well till one flash of defiance.

<sup>8</sup> The great city is that which has the greatest man or  
woman ;  
If it be a few ragged huts, it is still the greatest city in  
the whole world.

## 5

<sup>9</sup> The place where the great city stands is not the  
place of stretch'd wharves, docks, manufactures,  
deposits of produce,  
Nor the place of ceaseless salutes of new comers, or the  
anchor-lifters of the departing,  
Nor the place of the tallest and costliest buildings, or  
shops selling goods from the rest of the earth,  
Nor the place of the best libraries and schools—nor the  
place where money is plentiest,  
Nor the place of the most numerous population.

<sup>10</sup> Where the city stands with the brawniest breed of  
orators and bards ;  
Where the city stands that is beloved by these, and  
loves them in return, and understands them ;  
Where no monuments exist to heroes, but in the com-  
mon words and deeds ;  
Where thrift is in its place, and prudence is in its place ;  
Where the men and women think lightly of the laws ;  
Where the slave ceases, and the master of slaves ceases ;  
Where the populace rise at once against the never-  
ending audacity of elected persons ;  
Where fierce men and women pour forth, as the sea to  
the whistle of death pours its sweeping and un-  
ript waves ;  
Where outside authority enters always after the preced-  
ence of inside authority ;  
Where the citizen is always the head and ideal—and  
President, Mayor, Governor, and what not, are  
agents for pay ;  
Where children are taught to be laws to themselves,  
and to depend on themselves ;

Where equanimity is illustrated in affairs ;  
 Where speculations on the Soul are encouraged ;  
 Where women walk in public processions in the streets,  
     the same as the men,  
 Where they enter the public assembly and take places  
     the same as the men ;  
 Where the city of the faithfulest friends stands ;  
 Where the city of the cleanliness of the sexes stands ;  
 Where the city of the healthiest fathers stands ;  
 Where the city of the best-bodied mothers stands,  
 There the great city stands.

## 6

<sup>11</sup> How beggarly appear arguments before a defiant deed !  
 How the floridness of the materials of cities shrivels  
     before a man's or woman's look !

<sup>12</sup> All waits, or goes by default, till a strong being appears ;

A strong being is the proof of the race, and of the ability of the universe ;

When he or she appears, materials are overaw'd,

The dispute on the Soul stops,

The old customs and phrases are confronted, turn'd  
     back, or laid away.

<sup>13</sup> What is your money-making now? what can it do now?  
 What is your respectability now?

What are your theology, tuition, society, traditions,  
     statute-books, now?

Where are your jibes of being now?

Where are your cavils about the Soul now?

## 7

<sup>14</sup> A sterile landscape covers the ore—there is as good  
     as the best, for all the forbidding appearance ;

There is the mine, there are the miners ;

The forge-furnace is there, the melt is accomplish'd ;  
     the hammers-men are at hand with their tongs  
     and hammers ;

What always served, and always serves, is at hand.

<sup>15</sup> Than this, nothing has better served—it has served all :  
 Served the fluent-tongued and subtle-sensed Greek, and  
     long ere the Greek :  
 Served in building the buildings that last longer than  
     any ;  
 Served the Hebrew, the Persian, the most ancient Hindostanee ;  
 Served the mound-raiser on the Mississippi—served  
     those whose relics remain in Central America ;  
 Served Albic temples in woods or on plains, with un-  
     hewn pillars, and the druids ;  
 Served the artificial clefts, vast, high, silent, on the  
     snow-cover'd hills of Scandinavia ;  
 Served those who, time out of mind, made on the granite  
     walls rough sketches of the sun, moon, stars,  
     ships, ocean-waves ;  
 Served the paths of the irruptions of the Goths—served  
     the pastoral tribes and nomads ;  
 Served the long, long distant Kelt—served the hardy  
     pirates of the Baltic ;  
 Served before any of those, the venerable and harmless  
     men of Ethiopia ;  
 Served the making of helms for the galleys of pleasure,  
     and the making of those for war ;  
 Served all great works on land, and all great works on  
     the sea ;  
 For the mediæval ages, and before the mediæval ages ;  
 Served not the living only, then as now, but served the  
     dead.

## 8

<sup>16</sup> I see the European headsman ;  
 He stands mask'd, clothed in red, with huge legs, and  
     strong naked arms,  
 And leans on a ponderous axe.

<sup>17</sup> (Whom have you slaughter'd lately, European heads-  
     man ?  
 Whose is that blood upon you, so wet and sticky ?)

<sup>18</sup> I see the clear sunsets of the martyrs ;

I see from the scaffolds the descending ghosts,  
 Ghosts of dead lords, uncrown'd ladies, impeach'd ministers,  
 rejected kings,  
 Rivals, traitors, poisoners, disgraced chieftains, and the  
 rest.

<sup>19</sup> I see those who in any land have died for the good  
 cause ;  
 The seed is spare, nevertheless the crop shall never run  
 out ;  
 (Mind you, O foreign kings, O priests, the crop shall  
 never run out.)

<sup>20</sup> I see the blood wash'd entirely away from the axe ;  
 Both blade and helve are clean ;  
 They spirt no more the blood of European nobles—  
 they clasp no more the necks of queens.

<sup>21</sup> I see the headsman withdraw and become useless ;  
 I see the scaffold untrodden and mouldy—I see no  
 longer any axe upon it ;  
 I see the mighty and friendly emblem of the power of  
 my own race—the newest, largest race.

## 9

<sup>22</sup> (America! I do not vaunt my love for you ;  
 I have what I have.)

<sup>23</sup> The axe leaps !  
 The solid forest gives fluid utterances ;  
 They tumble forth, they rise and form,  
 Hut, tent, landing, survey,  
 Flail, plough, pick, crowbar, spade,  
 Shingle, rail, prop, wainscot, jamb, lath, panel, gable,  
 Citadel, ceiling, saloon, academy, organ, exhibition-  
 house, library,  
 Cornice, trellis, pilaster, balcony, window, shutter, tur-  
 ret, porch,  
 Hoe, rake, pitch-fork, pencil, wagon, staff, saw, jack-  
 plane, mallet, wedge, rounce,



Chair, tub, hoop, table, wicket, vane, sash, floor,  
Work-box, chest, string'd instrument, boat, frame, and  
what not,  
Capitols of States, and capitol of the nation of States,  
Long stately rows in avenues, hospitals for orphans, or  
for the poor or sick,  
Manhattan steamboats and clippers, taking the measure  
of all seas.

<sup>24</sup> The shapes arise!

Shapes of the using of axes anyhow, and the users, and  
all that neighbors them,  
Cutters down of wood, and haulers of it to the Penob-  
scot or Kennebec,  
Dwellers in cabins among the Californian mountains, or  
by the little lakes, or on the Columbia,  
Dwellers south on the banks of the Gila or Rio Grande  
—friendly gatherings, the characters and fun,  
Dwellers up north in Minnesota and by the Yellowstone  
river—dwellers on coasts and off coasts,  
Seal-fishers, whalers, arctic seamen breaking passages  
through the ice.

<sup>25</sup> The shapes arise!

Shapes of factories, arsenals, foundries, markets ;  
Shapes of the two-threaded tracks of railroads ;  
Shapes of the sleepers of bridges, vast frameworks,  
girders, arches ;  
Shapes of the fleets of barges, tows, lake and canal craft,  
river craft.

<sup>26</sup> The shapes arise!

Ship-yards and dry-docks along the Eastern and West-  
ern Seas, and in many a bay and by-place,  
The live-oak kelsons, the pine planks, the spars, the  
hackmatack-roots for knees,  
The ships themselves on their ways, the tiers of scaf-  
folds, the workmen busy outside and inside,  
The tools lying around, the great auger and little auger,  
the adze, bolt, line, square, gouge, and bead-  
plane.



## 10

<sup>27</sup> The shapes arise !

The shape measur'd, saw'd, jack'd, join'd, stain'd,  
The coffin-shape for the dead to lie within in his shroud ;  
The shape got out in posts, in the bedstead posts, in  
the posts of the bride's bed ;  
The shape of the little trough, the shape of the rockers  
beneath, the shape of the babe's cradle ;  
The shape of the floor-planks, the floor-planks for  
dancers' feet ;  
The shape of the planks of the family home, the home  
of the friendly parents and children,  
The shape of the roof of the home of the happy young  
man and woman—the roof over the well-married  
young man and woman,  
The roof over the supper joyously cook'd by the chaste  
wife, and joyously eaten by the chaste husband,  
content after his day's work.

<sup>28</sup> The shapes arise !

The shape of the prisoner's place in the court-room, and  
of him or her seated in the place ;  
The shape of the liquor-bar lean'd against by the young  
rum-drinker and the old rum-drinker ;  
The shape of the shamed and angry stairs, trod by  
sneaking footsteps ;  
The shape of the sly settee, and the adulterous un-  
wholesome couple ;  
The shape of the gambling-board with its devilish win-  
nings and losings ;  
The shape of the step-ladder for the convicted and sen-  
tenced murderer, the murderer with haggard  
face and pinion'd arms,  
The sheriff at hand with his deputies, the silent and  
white-lipp'd crowd, the dangling of the rope.

<sup>29</sup> The shapes arise !

Shapes of doors giving many exits and entrances ;  
The door passing the dissever'd friend, flush'd and in  
haste ;  
The door that admits good news and bad news ;

The door whence the son left home, confident and  
 puff'd up ;  
 The door he enter'd again from a long and scandalous  
 absence, diseas'd, broken down, without inno-  
 cence, without means.

## 11

<sup>30</sup> Her shape arises,  
 She, less guarded than ever, yet more guarded than  
 ever ;  
 The gross and soil'd she moves among do not make her  
 gross and soil'd ;  
 She knows the thoughts as she passes—nothing is con-  
 ceal'd from her ;  
 She is none the less considerate or friendly therefor ;  
 She is the best belov'd—it is without exception—she  
 has no reason to fear, and she does not fear ;  
 Oaths, quarrels, hiccupp'd songs, smutty expressions,  
 are idle to her as she passes ;  
 She is silent—she is possess'd of herself—they do not  
 offend her ;  
 She receives them as the laws of nature receive them  
 —she is strong,  
 She too is a law of nature—there is no law stronger  
 than she is.

## 12

<sup>31</sup> The main shapes arise !  
 Shapes of Democracy, total—result of centuries ;  
 Shapes, ever projecting other shapes ;  
 Shapes of turbulent manly cities ;  
 Shapes of the friends and home-givers of the whole  
 earth,  
 Shapes bracing the earth, and braced with the whole  
 earth.

## SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD.

1

<sup>1</sup> Afoot and light-hearted, I take to the open road,  
Healthy, free, the world before me,  
The long brown path before me, leading wherever I  
choose.

<sup>2</sup> Henceforth I ask not good-fortune—I myself am good-  
fortune ;  
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more,  
need nothing,  
Strong and content, I travel the open road.

<sup>3</sup> The earth—that is sufficient ;  
I do not want the constellations any nearer ;  
I know they are very well where they are ;  
I know they suffice for those who belong to them.

<sup>4</sup> (Still here I carry my old delicious burdens ;  
I carry them, men and women—I carry them with me  
wherever I go ;  
I swear it is impossible for me to get rid of them ;  
I am fill'd with them, and I will fill them in return.)

2

<sup>5</sup> You road I enter upon and look around ! I believe  
you are not all that is here ;  
I believe that much unseen is also here.

<sup>6</sup> Here the profound lesson of reception, neither preference or denial ;  
The black with his woolly head, the felon, the diseas'd,  
the illiterate person, are not denied ;  
The birth, the hasting after the physician, the beggar's  
tramp, the drunkard's stagger, the laughing party  
of mechanics,  
The escaped youth, the rich person's carriage, the fop,  
the eloping couple,  
The early market-man, the hearse, the moving of furniture  
into the town, the return back from the town,  
They pass—I also pass—anything passes—none can be  
interdicted ;  
None but are accepted—none but are dear to me.

## 3

<sup>7</sup> You air that serves me with breath to speak !  
You objects that call from diffusion my meanings, and  
give them shape !  
You light that wraps me and all things in delicate  
equable showers !  
You paths worn in the irregular hollows by the road-  
sides !  
I think you are latent with unseen existences—you are  
so dear to me.

<sup>8</sup> You flagg'd walks of the cities ! you strong curbs at  
the edges !  
You ferries ! you planks and posts of wharves ! you  
timber-lined sides ! you distant ships !  
You rows of houses ! you window-pierc'd façades ! you  
roofs !  
You porches and entrances ! you copings and iron  
guards !  
You windows whose transparent shells might expose so  
much !  
You doors and ascending steps ! you arches !  
You gray stones of interminable pavements ! you trod-  
den crossings !

From all that has been near you, I believe you have imparted to yourselves, and now would impart the same secretly to me ;

From the living and the dead I think you have peopled your impassive surfaces, and the spirits thereof would be evident and amicable with me.

## 4

<sup>9</sup> The earth expanding right hand and left hand,  
The picture alive, every part in its best light,  
The music falling in where it is wanted, and stopping  
where it is not wanted,  
The cheerful voice of the public road—the gay fresh  
sentiment of the road.

<sup>10</sup> O highway I travel! O public road! do you say to  
me, *Do not leave me?*  
Do you say, *Venture not? If you leave me, you are lost?*  
Do you say, *I am already prepared—I am well-beaten and  
undenied—adhere to me?*

<sup>11</sup> O public road! I say back, I am not afraid to leave  
you—yet I love you ;  
You express me better than I can express myself ;  
You shall be more to me than my poem.

<sup>12</sup> I think heroic deeds were all conceiv'd in the open  
air, and all great poems also ;  
I think I could stop here myself, and do miracles ;  
(My judgments, thoughts, I henceforth try by the open  
air, the road ;)  
I think whatever I shall meet on the road I shall like,  
and whoever beholds me shall like me ;  
I think whoever I see must be happy.

## 5

<sup>13</sup> From this hour, freedom!  
From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits and  
imaginary lines,  
Going where I list, my own master, total and absolute,



Listening to others, and considering well what they say,  
Pausing, searching, receiving, contemplating,  
Gently, but with undeniable will, divesting myself of  
the holds that would hold me.

<sup>14</sup> I inhale great draughts of space ;  
The east and the west are mine, and the north and the  
south are mine.

<sup>15</sup> I am larger, better than I thought ;  
I did not know I held so much goodness.

<sup>16</sup> All seems beautiful to me ;  
I can repeat over to men and women, You have done  
such good to me, I would do the same to you.

<sup>17</sup> I will recruit for myself and you as I go ;  
I will scatter myself among men and women as I go ;  
I will toss the new gladness and roughness among  
them ;  
Whoever denies me, it shall not trouble me ;  
Whoever accepts me, he or she shall be blessed, and  
shall bless me.

## 6

<sup>18</sup> Now if a thousand perfect men were to appear, it  
would not amaze me ;  
Now if a thousand beautiful forms of women appear'd,  
it would not astonish me.

<sup>19</sup> Now I see the secret of the making of the best per-  
sons,  
It is to grow in the open air, and to eat and sleep with  
the earth.

<sup>20</sup> Here a great personal deed has room ;  
A great deed seizes upon the hearts of the whole race  
of men,  
Its effusion of strength and will overwhelms law, and  
mocks all authority and all argument against it.

<sup>21</sup> Here is the test of wisdom ;  
 Wisdom is not finally tested in schools ;  
 Wisdom cannot be pass'd from one having it, to another not having it ;  
 Wisdom is of the Soul, is not susceptible of proof, is its own proof,  
 Applies to all stages and objects and qualities, and is content,  
 Is the certainty of the reality and immortality of things, and the excellence of things ;  
 Something there is in the float of the sight of things that provokes it out of the Soul.

<sup>22</sup> Now I reëxamine philosophies and religions,  
 They may prove well in lecture-rooms, yet not prove at all under the spacious clouds, and along the landscape and flowing currents.

<sup>23</sup> Here is realization ;  
 Here is a man tallied—he realizes here what he has in him ;  
 The past, the future, majesty, love—if they are vacant of you, you are vacant of them.

<sup>24</sup> Only the kernel of every object nourishes ;  
 Where is he who tears off the husks for you and me ?  
 Where is he that undoes stratagems and envelopes for you and me ?

<sup>25</sup> Here is adhesiveness—it is not previously fashion'd—it is apropos ;  
 Do you know what it is, as you pass, to be loved by strangers ?  
 Do you know the talk of those turning eye-balls ?

## 7

<sup>26</sup> Here is the efflux of the Soul ;  
 The efflux of the Soul comes from within, through embower'd gates, ever provoking questions :  
 These yearnings, why are they ? These thoughts in the darkness, why are they ?

Why are there men and women that while they are  
 nigh me, the sun-light expands my blood?  
 Why, when they leave me, do my pennants of joy sink  
 flat and lank?  
 Why are there trees I never walk under, but large and  
 melodious thoughts descend upon me?  
 (I think they hang there winter and summer on those  
 trees, and always drop fruit as I pass;)  
 What is it I interchange so suddenly with strangers?  
 What with some driver, as I ride on the seat by his  
 side?  
 What with some fisherman, drawing his seine by the  
 shore, as I walk by, and pause?  
 What gives me to be free to a woman's or man's good-  
 will? What gives them to be free to mine?

## 8

<sup>27</sup> The efflux of the Soul is happiness—here is happi-  
 ness;  
 I think it pervades the open air, waiting at all times;  
 Now it flows unto us—we are rightly charged.

<sup>28</sup> Here rises the fluid and attaching character;  
 The fluid and attaching character is the freshness and  
 sweetness of man and woman;  
 (The herbs of the morning sprout no fresher and sweeter  
 every day out of the roots of themselves, than it  
 sprouts fresh and sweet continually out of itself.)

<sup>29</sup> Toward the fluid and attaching character exudes the  
 sweat of the love of young and old;  
 From it falls distill'd the charm that mocks beauty and  
 attainments;  
 Toward it heaves the shuddering longing ache of contact.

## 9

<sup>30</sup> Allons! whoever you are, come travel with me!  
 Traveling with me, you find what never tires.

<sup>31</sup> The earth never tires ;  
The earth is rude, silent, incomprehensible at first—  
Nature is rude and incomprehensible at first ;  
Be not discouraged—keep on—there are divine things,  
well envelop'd ;  
I swear to you there are divine things more beautiful  
than words can tell.

<sup>32</sup> Allons ! we must not stop here !  
However sweet these laid-up stores—however convenient this dwelling, we cannot remain here ;  
However shelter'd this port, and however calm these waters, we must not anchor here ;  
However welcome the hospitality that surrounds us, we are permitted to receive it but a little while.

## 10

<sup>33</sup> Allons ! the inducements shall be greater ;  
We will sail pathless and wild seas ;  
We will go where winds blow, waves dash, and the  
Yankee clipper speeds by under full sail.

<sup>34</sup> Allons ! with power, liberty, the earth, the elements !  
Health, defiance, gayety, self-esteem, curiosity ;  
Allons ! from all formules !  
From your formules, O bat-eyed and materialistic priests !

<sup>35</sup> The stale cadaver blocks up the passage—the burial waits no longer.

<sup>36</sup> Allons ! yet take warning !  
He traveling with me needs the best blood, thews, endurance ;  
None may come to the trial, till he or she bring courage and health.

<sup>37</sup> Come not here if you have already spent the best of yourself ;  
Only those may come, who come in sweet and determined bodies ;

No diseas'd person—no rum-drinker or venereal taint  
is permitted here.

<sup>38</sup> I and mine do not convince by arguments, similes,  
rhymes ;  
We convince by our presence.

## 11

<sup>39</sup> Listen! I will be honest with you ;  
I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough  
new prizes ;  
These are the days that must happen to you :

<sup>40</sup> You shall not heap up what is call'd riches,  
You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or  
achieve,  
You but arrive at the city to which you were destin'd—  
you hardly settle yourself to satisfaction, before  
you are call'd by an irresistible call to depart,  
You shall be treated to the ironical smiles and mock-  
ings of those who remain behind you ;  
What beckonings of love you receive, you shall only  
answer with passionate kisses of parting,  
You shall not allow the hold of those who spread their  
reach'd hands toward you.

## 12

<sup>41</sup> Allons! after the GREAT COMPANIONS! and to belong  
to them!  
They too are on the road! they are the swift and ma-  
jestic men! they are the greatest women.

<sup>42</sup> Over that which hinder'd them—over that which re-  
tarded—passing impediments large or small,  
Committers of crimes, committers of many beautiful  
virtues,  
Enjoyers of calms of seas, and storms of seas,  
Sailors of many a ship, walkers of many a mile of land,  
Habitué of many distant countries, habitués of far-  
distant dwellings,



Trusters of men and women, observers of cities, solitary  
toilers,  
Pausers and contemplators of tufts, blossoms, shells of  
the shore,  
Dancers at wedding-dances, kissers of brides, tender  
helpers of children, bearers of children,  
Soldiers of revolts, standers by gaping graves, lowerers  
down of coffins,  
Journeys over consecutive seasons, over the years—  
the curious years, each emerging from that which  
preceded it,  
Journeys as with companions, namely, their own  
diverse phases,  
Forth-steppers from the latent unrealized baby-days,  
Journeys gayly with their own youth—Journeys  
with their bearded and well-grain'd manhood,  
Journeys with their womanhood, ample, unsurpass'd,  
content,  
Journeys with their own sublime old age of manhood  
or womanhood,  
Old age, calm, expanded, broad with the haughty  
breadth of the universe,  
Old age, flowing free with the delicious near-by freedom  
of death.

## 13

<sup>43</sup> Allons! to that which is endless, as it was begin-  
ningless,  
To undergo much, tramps of days, rests of nights,  
To merge all in the travel they tend to, and the days and  
nights they tend to,  
Again to merge them in the start of superior journeys;  
To see nothing anywhere but what you may reach it  
and pass it,  
To conceive no time, however distant, but what you  
may reach it and pass it,  
To look up or down no road but it stretches and waits  
for you—however long, but it stretches and waits  
for you;  
To see no being, not God's or any, but you also go  
thither,

To see no possession but you may possess it—enjoying  
all without labor or purchase—abstracting the  
feast, yet not abstracting one particle of it ;  
To take the best of the farmer's farm and the rich man's  
elegant villa, and the chaste blessings of the well-  
married couple, and the fruits of orchards and  
flowers of gardens,  
To take to your use out of the compact cities as you  
pass through,  
To carry buildings and streets with you afterward  
wherever you go,  
To gather the minds of men out of their brains as you  
encounter them—to gather the love out of their  
hearts,  
To take your lovers on the road with you, for all that  
you leave them behind you,  
To know the universe itself as a road—as many roads—  
as roads for traveling souls.

## 14

<sup>44</sup> The Soul travels ;  
The body does not travel as much as the soul ;  
The body has just as great a work as the soul, and parts  
away at last for the journeys of the soul.

<sup>45</sup> All parts away for the progress of souls ;  
All religion, all solid things, arts, governments,—all  
that was or is apparent upon this globe or any  
globe, falls into niches and corners before the  
procession of Souls along the grand roads of the  
universe.

<sup>46</sup> Of the progress of the souls of men and women along  
the grand roads of the universe, all other progress  
is the needed emblem and sustenance.

<sup>47</sup> Forever alive, forever forward,  
Stately, solemn, sad, withdrawn, baffled, mad, turbulent,  
feeble, dissatisfied,  
Desperate, proud, fond, sick, accepted by men, rejected  
by men,

They go ! they go ! I know that they go, but I know  
not where they go ;  
But I know that they go toward the best—toward some-  
thing great.

## 15.

<sup>48</sup> Allons ! whoever you are ! come forth !  
You must not stay sleeping and dallying there in the  
house, though you built it, or though it has been  
built for you.

<sup>49</sup> Allons ! out of the dark confinement !  
It is useless to protest—I know all, and expose it.

<sup>50</sup> Behold, through you as bad as the rest,  
Through the laughter, dancing, dining, supping, of  
people,  
Inside of dresses and ornaments, inside of those wash'd  
and trimm'd faces,  
Behold a secret silent loathing and despair.

<sup>51</sup> No husband, no wife, no friend, trusted to hear the  
confession ;  
Another self, a duplicate of every one, skulking and  
hiding it goes,  
Formless and wordless through the streets of the cities,  
polite and bland in the parlors,  
In the cars of rail-roads, in steamboats, in the public  
assembly,  
Home to the houses of men and women, at the table, in  
the bed-room, everywhere,  
Smartly attired, countenance smiling, form upright,  
death under the breast-bones, hell under the  
skull-bones,  
Under the broadcloth and gloves, under the ribbons  
and artificial flowers,  
Keeping fair with the customs, speaking not a syllable  
of itself,  
Speaking of anything else, but never of itself.

## 16

<sup>52</sup> Allons ! through struggles and wars !  
The goal that was named cannot be countermanded.

<sup>53</sup> Have the past struggles succeeded ?  
What has succeeded ? yourself ? your nation ? nature ?  
Now understand me well—It is provided in the essence  
of things, that from any fruition of success, no  
matter what, shall come forth something to make  
a greater struggle necessary.

<sup>54</sup> My call is the call of battle—I nourish active rebellion ;  
He going with me must go well arm'd ;  
He going with me goes often with spare diet, poverty,  
angry enemies, desertions.

## 17

<sup>55</sup> Allons ! the road is before us !  
It is safe—I have tried it—my own feet have tried it well.

<sup>56</sup> Allons ! be not detain'd !  
Let the paper remain on the desk unwritten, and the  
book on the shelf unopen'd !  
Let the tools remain in the workshop ! let the money  
remain unearn'd !  
Let the school stand ! mind not the cry of the teacher !  
Let the preacher preach in his pulpit ! let the lawyer  
plead in the court, and the judge expound the  
law.

<sup>57</sup> Mon enfant ! I give you my hand !  
I give you my love, more precious than money,  
I give you myself, before preaching or law ;  
Will you give me yourself ? will you come travel with  
me ?  
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live ?

# LEAVES OF GRASS.

---

## I SIT AND LOOK OUT.

I sit and look out upon all the sorrows of the world,  
and upon all oppression and shame ;  
I hear secret convulsive sobs from young men, at anguish with themselves, remorseful after deeds done ;  
I see, in low life, the mother misused by her children, dying, neglected, gaunt, desperate ;  
I see the wife misused by her husband—I see the treacherous seducer of young women ;  
I mark the ranklings of jealousy and unrequited love, attempted to be hid—I see these sights on the earth ;  
I see the workings of battle, pestilence, tyranny—I see martyrs and prisoners ;  
I observe a famine at sea—I observe the sailors casting lots who shall be kill'd, to preserve the lives of the rest ;  
I observe the slights and degradations cast by arrogant persons upon laborers, the poor, and upon negroes, and the like ;  
All these—All the meanness and agony without end, I sitting, look out upon,  
See, hear, and am silent.

---

## ME IMPERTURBE.

Me imperturbe, standing at ease in Nature,  
Master of all, or mistress of all—aplomb in the midst of irrational things,  
Imbued as they—passive, receptive, silent as they,  
Finding my occupation, poverty, notoriety, foibles, crimes, less important than I thought ;



Me private, or public, or menial, or solitary—all these  
subordinate, (I am eternally equal with the best  
—I am not subordinate ;)  
Me toward the Mexican Sea, or in the Mannahatta, or  
the Tennessee, or far north, or inland,  
A river man, or a man of the woods, or of any farm-life  
of These States, or of the coast, or the lakes, or  
Kanada,  
Me, wherever my life is lived, O to be self-balanced for  
contingencies !  
O to confront night, storms, hunger, ridicule, accidents,  
rebuffs, as the trees and animals do.

---

### As I Lay with my Head in your Lap, Camerado.

As I lay with my head in your lap, Camerado,  
The confession I made I resume—what I said to you  
and the open air I resume :  
I know I am restless, and make others so ;  
I know my words are weapons, full of danger, full of  
death ;  
(Indeed I am myself the real soldier ;  
It is not he, there, with his bayonet, and not the red-  
striped artilleryman ;)  
For I confront peace, security, and all the settled laws,  
to unsettle them ;  
I am more resolute because all have denied me, than I  
could ever have been had all accepted me ;  
I heed not, and have never heeded, either experience,  
cautions, majorities, nor ridicule ;  
And the threat of what is call'd hell is little or nothing  
to me ;  
And the lure of what is call'd heaven is little or nothing  
to me ;  
... Dear camerado ! I confess I have urged you onward  
with me, and still urge you, without the least  
idea what is our destination,  
Or whether we shall be victorious, or utterly quell'd and  
defeated.

## CROSSING BROOKLYN FERRY.

---

1

<sup>1</sup> FLOOD-TIDE below me! I watch you face to face;  
Clouds of the west! sun there half an hour high! I see  
you also face to face.

<sup>2</sup> Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes! how curious you are to me!  
On the ferry-boats, the hundreds and hundreds that  
cross, returning home, are more curious to me  
than you suppose;  
And you that shall cross from shore to shore years  
hence, are more to me, and more in my meditations,  
than you might suppose.

2

<sup>3</sup> The impalpable sustenance of me from all things, at  
all hours of the day;  
The simple, compact, well-join'd scheme—myself disintegrated,  
every one disintegrated, yet part of the  
scheme;  
The similitudes of the past, and those of the future;  
The glories strung like beads on my smallest sights and  
hearings—on the walk in the street, and the passage  
over the river;  
The current rushing so swiftly, and swimming with me  
far away;

The others that are to follow me, the ties between me  
and them ;  
The certainty of others—the life, love, sight, hearing of  
others.

<sup>4</sup> Others will enter the gates of the ferry, and cross from  
shore to shore ;  
Others will watch the run of the flood-tide ;  
Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and  
west, and the heights of Brooklyn to the south  
and east ;  
Others will see the islands large and small ;  
Fifty years hence, others will see them as they cross,  
the sun half an hour high ;  
A hundred years hence, or ever so many hundred years  
hence, others will see them,  
Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring in of the flood-tide,  
the falling back to the sea of the ebb-tide.

## 3

<sup>5</sup> It avails not, neither time or place—distance avails  
not ;  
I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or  
ever so many generations hence ;  
I project myself—also I return—I am with you, and  
know how it is.

<sup>6</sup> Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky,  
so I felt ;  
Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one  
of a crowd ;  
Just as you are refresh'd by the gladness of the river  
and the bright flow, I was refresh'd ;  
Just as you stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with  
the swift current, I stood, yet was hurried ;  
Just as you look on the numberless masts of ships, and  
the thick-stem'd pipes of steamboats, I look'd.

<sup>7</sup> I too many and many a time cross'd the river, the sun  
half an hour high ;

I watched the Twelfth-month sea-gulls—I saw them  
high in the air, floating with motionless wings,  
oscillating their bodies,  
I saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their  
bodies, and left the rest in strong shadow,  
I saw the slow-wheeling circles, and the gradual edging  
toward the south.

<sup>8</sup> I too saw the reflection of the summer sky in the  
water,  
Had my eyes dazzled by the shimmering track of beams,  
Look'd at the fine centrifugal spokes of light round the  
shape of my head in the sun-lit water,  
Look'd on the haze on the hills southward and south-  
westward,  
Look'd on the vapor as it flew in fleeces tinged with  
violet,  
Look'd toward the lower bay to notice the arriving  
ships,  
Saw their approach, saw aboard those that were near me,  
Saw the white sails of schooners and sloops—saw the  
ships at anchor,  
The sailors at work in the rigging, or out astride the  
spars,  
The round masts, the swinging motion of the hulls, the  
slender serpentine pennants,  
The large and small steamers in motion, the pilots in  
their pilot-houses,  
The white wake left by the passage, the quick tremulous  
whirl of the wheels,  
The flags of all nations, the falling of them at sun-set,  
The scallop-edged waves in the twilight, the ladled cups,  
the frolicsome crests and glistening,  
The stretch afar growing dimmer and dimmer, the gray  
walls of the granite store-houses by the docks,  
On the river the shadowy group, the big steam-tug  
closely flank'd on each side by the barges—the  
hay-boat, the belated lighter,  
On the neighboring shore, the fires from the foundry  
chimneys burning high and glaringly into the  
night,

Casting their flicker of black, contrasted with wild red  
and yellow light, over the tops of houses, and  
down into the clefts of streets.

## 4

<sup>9</sup> These, and all else, were to me the same as they are  
to you ;  
I project myself a moment to tell you—also I return.

<sup>10</sup> I loved well those cities ;  
I loved well the stately and rapid river ;  
The men and women I saw were all near to me ;  
Others the same—others who look back on me, because  
I look'd forward to them ;  
(The time will come, though I stop here to-day and to-  
night.)

## 5

<sup>11</sup> What is it, then, between us ?  
What is the count of the scores or hundreds of years  
between us ?

<sup>12</sup> Whatever it is, it avails not—distance avails not, and  
place avails not.

## 6

<sup>13</sup> I too lived—Brooklyn, of ample hills, was mine ;  
I too walk'd the streets of Manhattan Island, and  
bathed in the waters around it ;  
I too felt the curious abrupt questionings stir within  
me,  
In the day, among crowds of people, sometimes they  
came upon me,  
In my walks home late at night, or as I lay in my bed,  
they came upon me.

<sup>14</sup> I too had been struck from the float forever held in  
solution ;  
I too had receiv'd identity by my Body ;



That I was, I knew was of my body—and what I should be, I knew I should be of my body.

## 7

<sup>15</sup> It is not upon you alone the dark patches fall,  
The dark threw patches down upon me also ;  
The best I had done seem'd to me blank and suspicious ;  
My great thoughts, as I supposed them, were they not  
in reality meagre ? would not people laugh at  
me ?

<sup>16</sup> It is not you alone who know what it is to be evil ;  
I am he who knew what it was to be evil ;  
I too knitted the old knot of contrariety,  
Blabb'd, blush'd, resented, lied, stole, grudg'd,  
Had guile, anger, lust, hot wishes I dared not speak,  
Was wayward, vain, greedy, shallow, sly, cowardly,  
malignant ;  
The wolf, the snake, the hog, not wanting in me,  
The cheating look, the frivolous word, the adulterous  
wish, not wanting,  
Refusals, hates, postponements, meanness, laziness, none  
of these wanting.

## 8

<sup>17</sup> But I was Manhattanesse, friendly and proud !  
I was call'd by my nighest name by clear loud voices  
of young men as they saw me approaching or  
passing,  
Felt their arms on my neck as I stood, or the negligent  
leaning of their flesh against me as I sat,  
Saw many I loved in the street, or ferry-boat, or public  
assembly, yet never told them a word,  
Lived the same life with the rest, the same old laughing,  
gnawing, sleeping,  
Play'd the part that still looks back on the actor or  
actress,  
The same old role, the role that is what we make it, as  
great as we like,  
Or as small as we like, or both great and small.

## 9

<sup>18</sup> Closer yet I approach you ;  
What thought you have of me, I had as much of you  
—I laid in my stores in advance ;  
I consider'd long and seriously of you before you were  
born.

<sup>19</sup> Who was to know what should come home to me ?  
Who knows but I am enjoying this ?  
Who knows but I am as good as looking at you now,  
for all you cannot see me ?

<sup>20</sup> It is not you alone, nor I alone ;  
Not a few races, nor a few generations, nor a few cen-  
turies ;  
It is that each came, or comes, or shall come, from its  
due emission,  
From the general centre of all, and forming a part  
of all :  
Everything indicates—the smallest does, and the largest  
does ;  
A necessary film envelopes all, and envelops the Soul  
for a proper time.

## 10

<sup>21</sup> Now I am curious what sight can ever be more  
stately and admirable to me than my mast-  
hemm'd Manhattan,  
My river and sun-set, and my scallop-edg'd waves of  
flood-tide,  
The sea-gulls oscillating their bodies, the hay-boat in  
the twilight, and the belated lighter ;  
Curious what Gods can exceed these that clasp me by  
the hand, and with voices I love call me promptly  
and loudly by my nighest name as I approach ;  
Curious what is more subtle than this which ties me to  
the woman or man that looks in my face,  
Which fuses me into you now, and pours my meaning  
into you.

<sup>22</sup> We understand, then, do we not ?

What I promis'd without mentioning it, have you not accepted?

What the study could not teach—what the preaching could not accomplish, is accomplish'd, is it not?

What the push of reading could not start, is started by me personally, is it not?

## 11

<sup>23</sup> Flow on, river! flow with the flood-tide, and ebb with the ebb-tide!

Frolic on, crested and scallop-edg'd waves!

Gorgeous clouds of the sun-set! drench with your splendor me, or the men and women generations after me;

Cross from shore to shore, countless crowds of passengers!

Stand up, tall masts of Mannahatta!—stand up, beautiful hills of Brooklyn!

Throb, baffled and curious brain! throw out questions and answers!

Suspend here and everywhere, eternal float of solution! Gaze, loving and thirsting eyes, in the house, or street, or public assembly!

Sound out, voices of young men! loudly and musically call me by my highest name!

Live, old life! play the part that looks back on the actor or actress!

Play the old role, the role that is great or small, according as one makes it!

Consider, you who peruse me, whether I may not in unknown ways be looking upon you;

Be firm, rail over the river, to support those who lean idly, yet haste with the hasting current;

Fly on, sea-birds! fly sideways, or wheel in large circles high in the air;

Receive the summer sky, you water! and faithfully hold it, till all downcast eyes have time to take it from you;

Diverge, fine spokes of light, from the shape of my head, or any one's head, in the sun-lit water;

Come on, ships from the lower bay! pass up or down,  
white-sail'd schooners, sloops, lighters!  
Flaunt away, flags of all nations! be duly lower'd at  
sunset ;  
Burn high your fires, foundry chimneys! cast black  
shadows at nightfall! cast red and yellow light  
over the tops of the houses ;  
Appearances, now or henceforth, indicate what you are ;  
You necessary film, continue to envelop the soul ;  
About my body for me, and your body for you, be hung  
our divinest aromas ;  
Thrive, cities! bring your freight, bring your shows,  
ample and sufficient rivers ;  
Expand, being than which none else is perhaps more  
spiritual ;  
Keep your places, objects than which none else is more  
lasting.

## 12

<sup>24</sup> We descend upon you and all things—we arrest you  
all ;  
We realize the soul only by you, you faithful solids  
and fluids ;  
Through you color, form, location, sublimity, ideality ;  
Through you every proof, comparison, and all the sug-  
gestions and determinations of ourselves.

<sup>25</sup> You have waited, you always wait, you dumb, beau-  
tiful ministers! you novices!  
We receive you with free sense at last, and are insatiate  
henceforward ;  
Not you any more shall be able to foil us, or withhold  
yourselves from us ;  
We use you, and do not cast you aside—we plant you  
permanently within us ;  
We fathom you not—we love you—there is perfection  
in you also ;  
You furnish your parts toward eternity ;  
Great or small, you furnish your parts toward the soul.

## WITH ANTECEDENTS.

## 1

<sup>1</sup> WITH antecedents ;  
With my fathers and mothers, and the accumulations  
of past ages ;  
With all which, had it not been, I would not now be  
here, as I am :  
With Egypt, India, Phenicia, Greece and Rome ;  
With the Kelt, the Scandinavian, the Alb, and the  
Saxon ;  
With antique maritime ventures,—with laws, artizan-  
ship, wars and journeys ;  
With the poet, the skald, the saga, the myth, and the  
oracle ;  
With the sale of slaves—with enthusiasts—with the  
troubadour, the crusader, and the monk ;  
With those old continents whence we have come to this  
new continent ;  
With the fading kingdoms and kings over there ;  
With the fading religions and priests ;  
With the small shores we look back to from our own  
large and present shores ;  
With countless years drawing themselves onward, and  
arrived at these years ;  
You and Me arrived—America arrived, and making  
this year ;  
This year! sending itself ahead countless years to come.

## 2

<sup>2</sup> O but it is not the years—it is I—it is You ;  
We touch all laws, and tally all antecedents ;  
We are the skald, the oracle, the monk, and the knight  
—we easily include them, and more ;  
We stand amid time, beginningless and endless—we  
stand amid evil and good ;  
All swings around us—there is as much darkness as  
light ;  
The very sun swings itself and its system of planets  
around us ;  
Its sun, and its again, all swing around us.



<sup>3</sup> As for me, (torn, stormy, even as I, amid these vehement days,)  
 I have the idea of all, and am all, and believe in all ;  
 I believe materialism is true, and spiritualism is true—  
 I reject no part.

<sup>4</sup> Have I forgotten any part?  
 Come to me, whoever and whatever, till I give you  
 recognition.

<sup>5</sup> I respect Assyria, China, Teutonia, and the Hebrews ;  
 I adopt each theory, myth, god, and demi-god ;  
 I see that the old accounts, bibles, genealogies, are true,  
 without exception ;  
 I assert that all past days were what they should have  
 been ;  
 And that they could no-how have been better than they  
 were,  
 And that to-day is what it should be—and that America  
 is,  
 And that to-day and America could no-how be better  
 than they are.

## 3

<sup>6</sup> In the name of These States, and in your and my  
 name, the Past,  
 And in the name of These States, and in your and my  
 name, the Present time.

<sup>7</sup> I know that the past was great, and the future will be  
 great,  
 And I know that both curiously conjoint in the present  
 time,  
 (For the sake of him I typify—for the common average  
 man's sake—your sake, if you are he ;)  
 And that where I am, or you are, this present day, there  
 is the centre of all days, all races,  
 And there is the meaning, to us, of all that has ever  
 come of races and days, or ever will come.

## THE ANSWERER.

---

NOW LIST TO MY MORNING'S ROMANZA.

1

<sup>1</sup> Now list to my morning's romanza—I tell the signs  
of the Answerer ;

To the cities and farms I sing, as they spread in the  
sunshine before me.

<sup>2</sup> A young man comes to me bearing a message from  
his brother ;

How shall the young man know the whether and when  
of his brother ?

Tell him to send me the signs.

<sup>3</sup> And I stand before the young man face to face, and  
take his right hand in my left hand, and his left  
hand in my right hand,

And I answer for his brother, and for men, and I an-  
swer for him that answers for all, and send these  
signs.

2

<sup>4</sup> Him all wait for—him all yield up to—his word is  
decisive and final,

Him they accept, in him lave, in him perceive them-  
selves, as amid light,

Him they immerse, and he immerses them.

<sup>5</sup> Beautiful women, the haughtiest nations, laws, the  
landscape, people, animals,  
The profound earth and its attributes, and the unquiet  
ocean, (so tell I my morning's romanza ;)  
All enjoyments and properties, and money, and what-  
ever money will buy,  
The best farms—others toiling and planting, and he  
unavoidably reaps,  
The noblest and costliest cities—others grading and  
building, and he domiciles there ;  
Nothing for any one, but what is for him—near and far  
are for him, the ships in the offing,  
The perpetual shows and marches on land, are for him,  
if they are for any body.

<sup>6</sup> He puts things in their attitudes ;  
He puts to-day out of himself, with plasticity and love ;  
He places his own city, times, reminiscences, parents,  
brothers and sisters, associations, employment,  
politics, so that the rest never shame them after-  
ward, nor assume to command them.

<sup>7</sup> He is the answerer ;  
What can be answer'd he answers—and what cannot be  
answer'd, he shows how it cannot be answer'd.

## 3

<sup>8</sup> A man is a summons and challenge ;  
(It is vain to skulk—Do you hear that mocking and  
laughter? Do you hear the ironical echoes?)

<sup>9</sup> Books, friendships, philosophers, priests, action, plea-  
sure, pride, beat up and down, seeking to give  
satisfaction ;  
He indicates the satisfaction, and indicates them that  
beat up and down also.

<sup>10</sup> Whichever the sex, whatever the season or place, he  
may go freshly and gently and safely, by day or  
by night ;

He has the pass-key of hearts—to him the response of  
the prying of hands on the knobs.

<sup>11</sup> His welcome is universal—the flow of beauty is not  
more welcome or universal than he is ;  
The person he favors by day, or sleeps with at night, is  
blessed.

## 4

<sup>12</sup> Every existence has its idiom—everything has an  
idiom and tongue ;  
He resolves all tongues into his own, and bestows it  
upon men, and any man translates, and any man  
translates himself also ;  
One part does not counteract another part—he is the  
joiner—he sees how they join.

<sup>13</sup> He says indifferently and alike, *How are you, friend?*  
to the President at his levee,  
And he says, *Good-day, my brother!* to Cudge that hoes  
in the sugar-field,  
And both understand him, and know that his speech is  
right.

<sup>14</sup> He walks with perfect ease in the Capitol,  
He walks among the Congress, and one Representative  
says to another, *Here is our equal, appearing and  
new.*

<sup>15</sup> Then the mechanics take him for a mechanic,  
And the soldiers suppose him to be a soldier, and the  
sailors that he has follow'd the sea,  
And the authors take him for an author, and the artists  
for an artist,  
And the laborers perceive he could labor with them and  
love them ;  
No matter what the work is, that he is the one to fol-  
low it, or has follow'd it,  
No matter what the nation, that he might find his  
brothers and sisters there.

<sup>16</sup> The English believe he comes of their English stock,  
A Jew to the Jew he seems—a Russ to the Russ—usual  
and near, removed from none.

<sup>17</sup> Whoever he looks at in the traveler's coffee-house  
claims him,

The Italian or Frenchman is sure, and the German is  
sure, and the Spaniard is sure, and the island  
Cuban is sure ;

The engineer, the deck-hand on the great lakes, or on  
the Mississippi, or St. Lawrence, or Sacramento,  
or Hudson, or Paumanok Sound, claims him.

<sup>18</sup> The gentleman of perfect blood acknowledges his  
perfect blood ;

The insulter, the prostitute, the angry person, the  
beggar, see themselves in the ways of him—he  
strangely transmutes them,

They are not vile any more—they hardly know them-  
selves, they are so grown.



## THE INDICATIONS.

<sup>1</sup> THE indications, and tally of time ;

Perfect sanity shows the master among philosophers ;

Time, always without flaw, indicates itself in parts ;

What always indicates the poet, is the crowd of the  
pleasant company of singers, and their words ;

The words of the singers are the hours or minutes of  
the light or dark—but the words of the maker  
of poems are the general light and dark ;

The maker of poems settles justice, reality, immor-  
tality,

His insight and power encircle things and the human  
race,

He is the glory and extract thus far, of things, and of  
the human race.



<sup>2</sup> The singers do not beget—only the Poet begets ;  
 The singers are welcom'd, understood, appear often  
 enough—but rare has the day been, likewise the  
 spot, of the birth of the maker of poems, the  
 Answerer,

(Not every century, or every five centuries, has con-  
 tain'd such a day, for all its names.)

<sup>3</sup> The singers of successive hours of centuries may have  
 ostensible names, but the name of each of them  
 is one of the singers,

The name of each is, eye-singer, ear-singer, head-  
 singer, sweet-singer, echo-singer, parlor-singer,  
 love-singer, or something else.

<sup>4</sup> All this time, and at all times, wait the words of true  
 poems ;

The words of true poems do not merely please,

The true poets are not followers of beauty, but the  
 august masters of beauty ;

The greatness of sons is the exuding of the greatness  
 of mothers and fathers,

The words of poems are the tuft and final applause of  
 science.

<sup>5</sup> Divine instinct, breadth of vision, the law of reason,  
 health, rudeness of body, withdrawnness,  
 Gayety, sun-tan, air-sweetness—such are some of the  
 words of poems.

<sup>6</sup> The sailor and traveler underlie the maker of poems,  
 the answerer ;

The builder, geometer, chemist, anatomist, phrenolo-  
 gist, artist—all these underlie the maker of  
 poems, the answerer.

<sup>7</sup> The words of the true poems give you more than  
 poems,

They give you to form for yourself, poems, religions,  
 politics, war, peace, behavior, histories, essays,  
 romances, and everything else,

They balance ranks, colors, races, creeds, and the  
sexes,

They do not seek beauty—they are sought,  
Forever touching them, or close upon them, follows  
beauty, longing, fain, love-sick.

<sup>8</sup> They prepare for death—yet are they not the finish,  
but rather the outset,

They bring none to his or her terminus, or to be content and full ;

Whom they take, they take into space, to behold the  
birth of stars, to learn one of the meanings,

To launch off with absolute faith—to sweep through the  
ceaseless rings, and never be quiet again.

---

### POETS TO COME.

<sup>1</sup> POETS to come ! orators, singers, musicians to come !  
Not to-day is to justify me, and answer what I am  
for ;

But you, a new brood, native, athletic, continental,  
greater than before known,

Arouse ! Arouse—for you must justify me—you must  
answer.

<sup>2</sup> I myself but write one or two indicative words for the  
future,

I but advance a moment, only to wheel and hurry back  
in the darkness.

<sup>3</sup> I am a man who, sauntering along, without fully stopping,  
turns a casual look upon you, and then  
averts his face,

Leaving it to you to prove and define it,  
Expecting the main things from you.

## I HEAR AMERICA SINGING.

I HEAR America singing, the varied carols I hear ;  
Those of mechanics—each one singing his, as it should  
be, blithe and strong ;  
The carpenter singing his, as he measures his plank or  
beam,  
The mason singing his, as he makes ready for work, or  
leaves off work ;  
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat—  
the deck-hand singing on the steamboat deck ;  
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench—the  
hatter singing as he stands ;  
The wood-cutter's song—the ploughboy's, on his way in  
the morning, or at the noon intermission, or at  
sundown ;  
The delicious singing of the mother—or of the young  
wife at work—or of the girl sewing or washing—  
Each singing what belongs to her, and to none  
else ;  
The day what belongs to the day—At night, the party  
of young fellows, robust, friendly,  
Singing, with open mouths, their strong melodious  
songs.

## THE CITY DEAD-HOUSE.

By the City Dead-House, by the gate,  
As idly sauntering, wending my way from the clangor,  
I curious pause—for lo! an outcast form, a poor dead  
    prostitute brought;  
Her corpse they deposit unclaim'd—it lies on the damp  
    brick pavement;  
The divine woman, her body—I see the Body—I look  
    on it alone,  
That house once full of passion and beauty—all else I  
    notice not;  
Nor stillness so cold, nor running water from faucet,  
    nor odors morbidic impress me;  
But the house alone—that wondrous house—that deli-  
    cate fair house—that ruin!  
That immortal house, more than all the rows of dwell-  
    ings ever built!  
Or white-domed Capitol itself, with majestic figure sur-  
    mounted—or all the old high-spired cathedrals;  
That little house alone, more than them all—poor, des-  
    perate house!  
Fair, fearful wreck! tenement of a Soul! itself a Soul!  
Unclaim'd, avoided house! take one breath from my  
    tremulous lips;  
Take one tear, dropt aside as I go, for thought of you,  
Dead house of love! house of madness and sin, crum-  
    bled! crush'd!  
House of life—erewhile talking and laughing—but ah,  
    poor house! dead, even then;  
Months, years, an echoing, garnish'd house—but dead,  
    dead, dead.

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## A FARM PICTURE.

THROUGH the ample open door of the peaceful country  
    barn,  
A sun-lit pasture field, with cattle and horses feeding;  
And haze, and vista, and the far horizon, fading away.

## CAROL OF OCCUPATIONS.

1

<sup>1</sup> COME closer to me ;  
Push close, my lovers, and take the best I possess ;  
Yield closer and closer, and give me the best you possess.

<sup>2</sup> This is unfinish'd business with me—How is it with  
you ?  
(I was chill'd with the cold types, cylinder, wet paper  
between us.)

<sup>3</sup> Male and Female !  
I pass so poorly with paper and types, I must pass with  
the contact of bodies and souls.

<sup>4</sup> American masses !  
I do not thank you for liking me as I am, and liking  
the touch of me—I know that it is good for you  
to do so.

2

<sup>5</sup> This is the carol of occupations ;  
In the labor of engines and trades, and the labor of  
fields, I find the developments,  
And find the eternal meanings.



<sup>6</sup> Workmen and Workwomen !

Were all educations, practical and ornamental, well display'd out of me, what would it amount to ?

Were I as the head teacher, charitable proprietor, wise statesman, what would it amount to ?

Were I to you as the boss employing and paying you, would that satisfy you ?

<sup>7</sup> The learn'd, virtuous, benevolent, and the usual terms ;  
A man like me, and never the usual terms.

<sup>8</sup> Neither a servant nor a master am I ;

I take no sooner a large price than a small price—I will have my own, whoever enjoys me ;

I will be even with you, and you shall be even with me.

<sup>9</sup> If you stand at work in a shop, I stand as nigh as the nighest in the same shop ;

If you bestow gifts on your brother or dearest friend, I demand as good as your brother or dearest friend ;

If your lover, husband, wife, is welcome by day or night, I must be personally as welcome ;

If you become degraded, criminal, ill, then I become so for your sake ;

If you remember your foolish and outlaw'd deeds, do you think I cannot remember my own foolish and outlaw'd deeds ?

If you carouse at the table, I carouse at the opposite side of the table ;

If you meet some stranger in the streets, and love him or her—why I often meet strangers in the street, and love them.

<sup>10</sup> Why, what have you thought of yourself ?

Is it you then that thought yourself less ?

Is it you that thought the President greater than you ?

Or the rich better off than you ? or the educated wiser than you ?

<sup>11</sup> Because you are greasy or pimpled, or that you were once drunk, or a thief,

Or diseas'd, or rheumatic, or a prostitute—or are so now;  
Or from frivolity or impotence, or that you are no  
scholar, and never saw your name in print,  
Do you give in that you are any less immortal?

## 3

<sup>12</sup> Souls of men and women ! it is not you I call unseen,  
unheard, untouchable and untouching ;  
It is not you I go argue pro and con about, and to  
settle whether you are alive or no ;  
I own publicly who you are, if nobody else owns.

<sup>13</sup> Grown, half-grown, and babe, of this country and  
every country, in-doors and out-doors, one just  
as much as the other, I see,  
And all else behind or through them.

<sup>14</sup> The wife—and she is not one jot less than the  
husband ;  
The daughter—and she is just as good as the son ;  
The mother—and she is every bit as much as the  
father.

<sup>15</sup> Offspring of ignorant and poor, boys apprenticed to  
trades,  
Young fellows working on farms, and old fellows work-  
ing on farms,  
Sailor-men, merchant-men, coasters, immigrants,  
All these I see—but nigher and farther the same I  
see ;  
None shall escape me, and none shall wish to escape  
me.

<sup>16</sup> I bring what you much need, yet always have,  
Not money, amours, dress, eating, but as good ;  
I send no agent or medium, offer no representative of  
value, but offer the value itself.

<sup>17</sup> There is something that comes home to one now  
and perpetually ;

It is not what is printed, preach'd, discussed—it eludes  
 discussion and print ;  
 It is not to be put in a book—it is not in this book ;  
 It is for you, whoever you are—it is no farther from  
 you than your hearing and sight are from you ;  
 It is hinted by nearest, commonest, readiest—it is ever  
 provoked by them.

<sup>18</sup> You may read in many languages, yet read nothing  
 about it ;  
 You may read the President's Message, and read nothing  
 about it there ;  
 Nothing in the reports from the State department or  
 Treasury department, or in the daily papers or  
 the weekly papers,  
 Or in the census or revenue returns, prices current, or  
 any accounts of stock.

## 4

<sup>19</sup> The sun and stars that float in the open air ;  
 The apple-shaped earth, and we upon it—surely the  
 drift of them is something grand !  
 I do not know what it is, except that it is grand, and  
 that it is happiness,  
 And that the enclosing purport of us here is not a  
 speculation, or bon-mot, or reconnoissance,  
 And that it is not something which by luck may turn  
 out well for us, and without luck must be a failure  
 for us,  
 And not something which may yet be retracted in a  
 certain contingency.

<sup>20</sup> The light and shade, the curious sense of body and  
 identity, the greed that with perfect complaisance  
 devours all things, the endless pride and  
 out-stretching of man, unspeakable joys and  
 sorrows,  
 The wonder every one sees in every one else he sees,  
 and the wonders that fill each minute of time  
 forever,

What have you reckon'd them for, camerado ?  
 Have you reckon'd them for a trade, or farm-work ? or  
 for the profits of a store ?  
 Or to achieve yourself a position ? or to fill a gentle-  
 man's leisure, or a lady's leisure ?

<sup>21</sup> Have you reckon'd the landscape took substance and  
 form that it might be painted in a picture ?  
 Or men and women that they might be written of, and  
 songs sung ?  
 Or the attraction of gravity, and the great laws and  
 harmonious combinations, and the fluids of the  
 air, as subjects for the savans ?  
 Or the brown land and the blue sea for maps and  
 charts ?  
 Or the stars to be put in constellations and named  
 fancy names ?  
 Or that the growth of seeds is for agricultural tables,  
 or agriculture itself ?

<sup>22</sup> Old institutions—these arts, libraries, legends, col-  
 lections, and the practice handed along in man-  
 ufactures—will we rate them so high ?  
 Will we rate our cash and business high ?—I have no  
 objection ;  
 I rate them as high as the highest—then a child born  
 of a woman and man I rate beyond all rate.

<sup>23</sup> We thought our Union grand, and our Constitution  
 grand ;  
 I do not say they are not grand and good, for they are ;  
 I am this day just as much in love with them as you ;  
 Then I am in love with you, and with all my fellows  
 upon the earth.

<sup>24</sup> We consider bibles and religions divine—I do not say  
 they are not divine ;  
 I say they have all grown out of you, and may grow out  
 of you still ;  
 It is not they who give the life—it is you who give the  
 life ;



Leaves are not more shed from the trees, or trees from the earth, than they are shed out of you.

## 5

<sup>25</sup> When the psalm sings instead of the singer ;  
When the script preaches, instead of the preacher ;  
When the pulpit descends and goes, instead of the  
carver that carved the supporting desk ;  
When I can touch the body of books, by night or by  
day, and when they touch my body back again ;  
When a university course convinces, like a slumbering  
woman and child convince ;  
When the minted gold in the vault smiles like the  
night-watchman's daughter ;  
When warrantee deeds loafe in chairs opposite, and are  
my friendly companions ;  
I intend to reach them my hand, and make as much of  
them as I do of men and women like you.

<sup>26</sup> The sum of all known reverence I add up in you,  
whoever you are ;  
The President is there in the White House for you—it  
is not you who are here for him ;  
The Secretaries act in their bureaus for you—not you  
here for them ;  
The Congress convenes every Twelfth-month for you ;  
Laws, courts, the forming of States, the charters of  
cities, the going and coming of commerce and  
mails, are all for you.

<sup>27</sup> List close, my scholars dear !  
All doctrines, all politics and civilization, exurge from  
you ;  
All sculpture and monuments, and anything inscribed  
anywhere, are tallied in you ;  
The gist of histories and statistics as far back as the  
records reach, is in you this hour, and myths and  
tales the same ;  
If you were not breathing and walking here, where  
would they all be ?



The most renown'd poems would be ashes, orations and  
plays would be vacuums.

<sup>28</sup> All architecture is what you do to it when you look  
upon it ;  
(Did you think it was in the white or gray stone ? or  
the lines of the arches and cornices ?)

<sup>29</sup> All music is what awakes from you, when you are  
reminded by the instruments ;

It is not the violins and the cornets—it is not the oboe  
nor the beating drums, nor the score of the  
baritone singer singing his sweet romanza—nor  
that of the men's chorus, nor that of the women's  
chorus,

It is nearer and farther than they.

## 6

<sup>30</sup> Will the whole come back then ?  
Can each see signs of the best by a look in the looking-  
glass ? is there nothing greater or more ?  
Does all sit there with you, with the mystic, unseen  
Soul ?

<sup>31</sup> Strange and hard that paradox true I give ;  
Objects gross and the unseen Soul are one.

<sup>32</sup> House-building, measuring, sawing the boards ;  
Blacksmithing, glass-blowing, nail-making, coopering,  
tin-roofing, shingle-dressing,  
Ship-joining, dock-building, fish-curing, ferrying, flag-  
ging of side-walks by flaggers,  
The pump, the pile-driver, the great derrick, the coal-  
kiln and brick-kiln,  
Coal-mines, and all that is down there,—the lamps in  
the darkness, echoes, songs, what meditations,  
what vast native thoughts looking through  
smutch'd faces,

- Iron-works, forge-fires in the mountains, or by the river-banks—men around feeling the melt with huge crowbars—lumps of ore, the due combining of ore, limestone, coal—the blast-furnace and the puddling-furnace, the loup-lump at the bottom of the melt at last—the rolling-mill, the stumpy bars of pig-iron, the strong, clean-shaped T-rail for railroads ;
- Oil-works, silk-works, white-lead-works, the sugar-house, steam-saws, the great mills and factories ;
- Stone-cutting, shapely trimmings for façades, or window or door-lintels—the mallet, the tooth-chisel, the jib to protect the thumb,
- Oakum, the oakum-chisel, the caulking-iron—the kettle of boiling vault-cement, and the fire under the kettle,
- The cotton-bale, the stevedore's hook, the saw and buck of the sawyer, the mould of the moulder, the working-knife of the butcher, the ice-saw, and all the work with ice,
- The implements for daguerreotyping—the tools of the rigger, grappler, sail-maker, block-maker,
- Goods of gutta-percha, papier-maché, colors, brushes, brush-making, glazier's implements,
- The veneer and glue-pot, the confectioner's ornaments, the decanter and glasses, the shears and flat-iron,
- The awl and knee-strap, the pint measure and quart measure, the counter and stool, the writing-pen of quill or metal—the making of all sorts of edged tools,
- The brewery, brewing, the malt, the vats, every thing that is done by brewers, also by wine-makers, also vinegar-makers,
- Leather-dressing, coach-making, boiler-making, rope-twisting, distilling, sign-painting, lime-burning, cotton-picking—electro-plating, electrotyping, stereotyping,
- Stave-machines, planing-machines, reaping-machines, ploughing-machines, thrashing-machines, steam wagons,

The cart of the carman, the omnibus, the ponderous  
 dray ;  
 Pyrotechny, letting off color'd fire-works at night, fancy  
 figures and jets ;  
 Beef on the butcher's stall, the slaughter-house of the  
 butcher, the butcher in his killing-clothes,  
 The pens of live pork, the killing-hammer, the hog-  
 hook, the scalding tub, gutting, the cutter's  
 cleaver, the packer's maul, and the plenteous  
 winter-work of pork-packing ;  
 Flour-works, grinding of wheat, rye, maize, rice—the  
 barrels and the half and quarter barrels, the  
 loaded barges, the high piles on wharves and  
 levees ;  
 The men, and the work of the men, on railroads,  
 coasters, fish-boats, canals ;  
 The daily routine of your own or any man's life—the  
 shop, yard, store, or factory ;  
 These shows all near you by day and night—workman !  
 whoever you are, your daily life !  
 In that and them the heft of the heaviest—in them far  
 more than you estimated, and far less also ;  
 In them realities for you and me—in them poems for  
 you and me ;  
 In them, not yourself—you and your Soul enclose all  
 things, regardless of estimation ;  
 In them the development good—in them, all themes  
 and hints.

<sup>23</sup> I do not affirm what you see beyond is futile—I do  
 not advise you to stop ;  
 I do not say leadings you thought great are not great ;  
 But I say that none lead to greater, than those lead to.

## 7

<sup>34</sup> Will you seek afar off ? you surely come back at  
 last,  
 In things best known to you, finding the best, or as  
 good as the best,  
 In folks nearest to you finding the sweetest, strongest,  
 lovingest ;

Happiness, knowledge, not in another place, but this  
 place—not for another hour, but this hour ;  
 Man in the first you see or touch—always in friend,  
 brother, nighest neighbor—Woman in mother,  
 lover, wife ;  
 The popular tastes and employments taking precedence  
 in poems or any where,  
 You workwomen and workmen of These States having  
 your own divine and strong life,  
 And all else giving place to men and women like you.

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## THOUGHTS.

### 1

Of ownership—As if one fit to own things could not at  
 pleasure enter upon all, and incorporate them  
 into himself or herself.

### 2

Of waters, forests, hills ;  
 Of the earth at large, whispering through medium of  
 me ;  
 Of vista—Suppose some sight in arriere, through the  
 formative chaos, presuming the growth, fulness,  
 life, now attain'd on the journey ;  
 (But I see the road continued, and the journey ever  
 continued ;)   
 —Of what was once lacking\* on earth, and in due time  
 has become supplied—And of what will yet be  
 supplied,  
 Because all I see and know, I believe to have purport  
 in what will yet be supplied.

## THE SLEEPERS.

1

<sup>1</sup> I WANDER all night in my vision,  
Stepping with light feet, swiftly and noiselessly step-  
ping and stopping,  
Bending with open eyes over the shut eyes of sleepers,  
Wandering and confused, lost to myself, ill-assorted,  
contradictory,  
Pausing, gazing, bending, and stopping.

<sup>2</sup> How solemn they look there, stretch'd and still !  
How quiet they breathe, the little children in their  
cradles !

<sup>3</sup> The wretched features of ennuyés, the white features  
of corpses, the livid faces of drunkards, the sick-  
gray faces of onanists,  
The gash'd bodies on battle-fields, the insane in their  
strong-door'd rooms, the sacred idiots, the new-  
born emerging from gates, and the dying emerg-  
ing from gates,  
The night pervades them and infolds them.

<sup>4</sup> The married couple sleep calmly in their bed—he  
with his palm on the hip of the wife, and she  
with her palm on the hip of the husband,  
The sisters sleep lovingly side by side in their bed,  
The men sleep lovingly side by side in theirs,  
And the mother sleeps, with her little child carefully  
wrapt.



<sup>5</sup> The blind sleep, and the deaf and dumb sleep,  
The prisoner sleeps well in the prison—the run-away  
son sleeps ;  
The murderer that is to be hung next day—how does  
he sleep ?  
And the murder'd person—how does he sleep ?

<sup>6</sup> The female that loves unrequited sleeps,  
And the male that loves unrequited sleeps,  
The head of the money-maker that plotted all day  
sleeps,  
And the enraged and treacherous dispositions—all, all  
sleep.

## 2

<sup>7</sup> I stand in the dark with drooping eyes by the worst-  
suffering and the most restless,  
I pass my hands soothingly to and fro a few inches  
from them,  
The restless sink in their beds—they fitfully sleep.

<sup>8</sup> Now I pierce the darkness—new beings appear,  
The earth recedes from me into the night,  
I saw that it was beautiful, and I see that what is not  
the earth is beautiful.

<sup>9</sup> I go from bedside to bedside—I sleep close with the  
other sleepers, each in turn,  
I dream in my dream all the dreams of the other dream-  
ers,  
And I become the other dreamers.

## 3

<sup>10</sup> I am a dance—Play up, there ! the fit is whirling me  
fast !

<sup>11</sup> I am the ever-laughing—it is new moon and twi-  
light,

I see the hiding of douceurs—I see nimble ghosts  
whichever way I look,  
Cache, and cache again, deep in the ground and sea,  
and where it is neither ground or sea.

<sup>12</sup> Well do they do their jobs, those journeymen divine,  
Only from me can they hide nothing, and would not if  
they could,  
I reckon I am their boss, and they make me a pet  
besides,  
And surround me and lead me, and run ahead when I  
walk,  
To lift their cunning covers, to signify me with stretch'd  
arms, and resume the way ;  
Onward we move ! a gay gang of blackguards ! with  
mirth-shouting music, and wild-flapping pennants  
of joy !

## 4

<sup>13</sup> I am the actor, the actress, the voter, the politician ;  
The emigrant and the exile, the criminal that stood in  
the box,  
He who has been famous, and he who shall be famous  
after to-day,  
The stammerer, the well-form'd person, the wasted or  
feeble person.

## 5

<sup>14</sup> I am she who adorn'd herself and folded her hair  
expectantly,  
My truant lover has come, and it is dark.

<sup>15</sup> Double yourself and receive me, darkness !  
Receive me and my lover too—he will not let me go  
without him.

<sup>16</sup> I roll myself upon you, as upon a bed—I resign my-  
self to the dusk.

## 6

<sup>17</sup> He whom I call answers me, and takes the place of  
my lover,  
He rises with me silently from the bed.

<sup>18</sup> Darkness! you are gentler than my lover—his flesh  
was sweaty and panting,  
I feel the hot moisture yet that he left me.

<sup>19</sup> My hands are spread forth, I pass them in all direc-  
tions,  
I would sound up the shadowy shore to which you are  
journeying.

<sup>20</sup> Be careful, darkness! already, what was it touch'd  
me?  
I thought my lover had gone, else darkness and he are  
one,  
I hear the heart-beat—I follow, I fade away.

## 7

<sup>21</sup> O hot-cheek'd and blushing! O foolish hectic!  
O for pity's sake, no one must see me now! my clothes  
were stolen while I was abed,  
Now I am thrust forth, where shall I run?

<sup>22</sup> Pier that I saw dimly last night, when I look'd from  
the windows!  
Pier out from the main, let me catch myself with you,  
and stay—I will not chafe you,  
I feel ashamed to go naked about the world.

<sup>23</sup> I am curious to know where my feet stand—and what  
this is flooding me, childhood or manhood—and  
the hunger that crosses the bridge between.

## 8

<sup>24</sup> The cloth laps a first sweet eating and drinking,  
Laps life-swelling yolks—laps ear of rose-corn, milky  
and just ripen'd;

The white teeth stay, and the boss-tooth advances in  
darkness,  
And liquor is spill'd on lips and bosoms by touching  
glasses, and the best liquor afterward.

## 9

<sup>25</sup> I descend my western course, my sinews are flaccid,  
Perfume and youth course through me, and I am their  
wake.

<sup>26</sup> It is my face yellow and wrinkled, instead of the old  
woman's,  
I sit low in a straw-bottom chair, and carefully darn  
my grandson's stockings.

<sup>27</sup> It is I too, the sleepless widow, looking out on the  
winter midnight,  
I see the sparkles of starshine on the icy and pallid  
earth.

<sup>28</sup> A shroud I see, and I am the shroud—I wrap a body,  
and lie in the coffin,  
It is dark here under ground—it is not evil or pain here  
—it is blank here, for reasons.

<sup>29</sup> It seems to me that everything in the light and air  
ought to be happy,  
Whoever is not in his coffin and the dark grave, let him  
know he has enough.

## 10

<sup>30</sup> I see a beautiful gigantic swimmer, swimming naked  
through the eddies of the sea,  
His brown hair lies close and even to his head—he  
strikes out with courageous arms—he urges him-  
self with his legs,  
I see his white body—I see his undaunted eyes,  
I hate the swift-running eddies that would dash him  
head-foremost on the rocks.

<sup>31</sup> What are you doing, you ruffianly red-trickled waves?  
Will you kill the courageous giant? Will you kill him  
in the prime of his middle age?

<sup>32</sup> Steady and long he struggles,  
He is baffled, bang'd, bruis'd—he holds out while his  
strength holds out,  
The slapping eddies are spotted with his blood—they  
bear him away—they roll him, swing him, turn  
him,  
His beautiful body is borne in the circling eddies, it is  
continually bruis'd on rocks,  
Swiftly and out of sight is borne the brave corpse.

## 11

<sup>33</sup> I turn, but do not extricate myself,  
Confused, a past-reading, another, but with darkness  
yet.

<sup>34</sup> The beach is cut by the razory ice-wind—the wreck-  
guns sound,  
The tempest lulls—the moon comes floundering through  
the drifts.

<sup>35</sup> I look where the ship helplessly heads end on—I hear  
the burst as she strikes—I hear the howls of  
dismay—they grow fainter and fainter.

<sup>36</sup> I cannot aid with my wringing fingers,  
I can but rush to the surf, and let it drench me and  
freeze upon me.

<sup>37</sup> I search with the crowd—not one of the company is  
wash'd to us alive ;  
In the morning I help pick up the dead and lay them  
in rows in a barn.

## 12

<sup>38</sup> Now of the older war-days, the defeat at Brooklyn,



Washington stands inside the lines—he stands on the  
intrench'd hills, amid a crowd of officers,  
His face is cold and damp—he cannot repress the weep-  
ing drops,  
He lifts the glass perpetually to his eyes—the color is  
blanch'd from his cheeks,  
He sees the slaughter of the southern braves confided  
to him by their parents.

<sup>39</sup> The same, at last and at last, when peace is declared,  
He stands in the room of the old tavern—the well-  
belov'd soldiers all pass through,  
The officers speechless and slow draw near in their  
turns,  
The chief encircles their necks with his arm, and kisses  
them on the cheek,  
He kisses lightly the wet cheeks one after another—he  
shakes hands, and bids good-by to the army.

## 13

<sup>40</sup> Now I tell what my mother told me to-day as we sat  
at dinner together,  
Of when she was a nearly grown girl, living home with  
her parents on the old homestead.

<sup>41</sup> A red squaw came one breakfast time to the old  
homestead,  
On her back she carried a bundle of rushes for rush-  
bottoming chairs,  
Her hair, straight, shiny, coarse, black, profuse, half-  
envelop'd her face,  
Her step was free and elastic, and her voice sounded  
exquisitely as she spoke.

<sup>42</sup> My mother look'd in delight and amazement at the  
stranger,  
She look'd at the freshness of her tall-borne face, and  
full and pliant limbs,  
The more she look'd upon her, she loved her,

Never before had she seen such wonderful beauty and  
purity,  
She made her sit on a bench by the jamb of the fire-  
place—she cook'd food for her,  
She had no work to give her, but she gave her remem-  
brance and fondness.

<sup>43</sup> The red squaw staid all the forenoon, and toward the  
middle of the afternoon she went away,  
O my mother was loth to have her go away!  
All the week she thought of her—she watch'd for her  
many a month,  
She remember'd her many a winter and many a summer,  
But the red squaw never came, nor was heard of there  
again.

## 14

<sup>44</sup> Now Lucifer was not dead—or if he was, I am his  
sorrowful terrible heir;  
I have been wrong'd—I am oppress'd—I hate him that  
oppresses me,  
I will either destroy him, or he shall release me.

<sup>45</sup> Damn him! how he does defile me!  
How he informs against my brother and sister, and  
takes pay for their blood!  
How he laughs when I look down the bend, after the  
steamboat that carries away my woman!

<sup>46</sup> Now the vast dusk bulk that is the whale's bulk, it  
seems mine;  
Warily, sportsman! though I lie so sleepy and slug-  
gish, the tap of my flukes is death.

## 15

<sup>47</sup> A show of the summer softness! a contact of some-  
thing unseen! an amour of the light and air!  
I am jealous, and overwhelm'd with friendliness,  
And will go gallivant with the light and air myself,

And have an unseen something to be in contact with them also.

<sup>48</sup> O love and summer! you are in the dreams, and in me!

Autumn and winter are in the dreams—the farmer goes with his thrift,

The droves and crops increase, and the barns are well-fill'd.

## 16

<sup>49</sup> Elements merge in the night—ships make tacks in the dreams,

The sailor sails—the exile returns home,

The fugitive returns unharm'd—the immigrant is back beyond months and years,

The poor Irishman lives in the simple house of his childhood, with the well-known neighbors and faces,

They warmly welcome him—he is barefoot again, he forgets he is well off;

The Dutchman voyages home, and the Scotchman and Welshman voyage home, and the native of the Mediterranean voyages home,

To every port of England, France, Spain, enter well-fill'd ships,

The Swiss foots it toward his hills—the Prussian goes his way, the Hungarian his way, and the Pole his way,

The Swede returns, and the Dane and Norwegian return.

## 17

<sup>50</sup> The homeward bound, and the outward bound,

The beautiful lost swimmer, the ennuyé, the onanist, the female that loves unrequited, the money-maker,

The actor and actress, those through with their parts, and those waiting to commence,

The affectionate boy, the husband and wife, the voter,  
 the nominee that is chosen, and the nominee that  
 has fail'd,  
 The great already known, and the great any time after  
 to-day,  
 The stammerer, the sick, the perfect-form'd, the homely,  
 The criminal that stood in the box, the judge that sat  
 and sentenced him, the fluent lawyers, the jury,  
 the audience,  
 The laughter and weeper, the dancer, the midnight  
 widow, the red squaw,  
 The consumptive, the erysipelite, the idiot, he that is  
 wrong'd,  
 The antipodes, and every one between this and them in  
 the dark,  
 I swear they are averaged now—one is no better than  
 the other,  
 The night and sleep have liken'd them and restored  
 them.

<sup>51</sup> I swear they are all beautiful ;  
 Every one that sleeps is beautiful—everything in the  
 dim light is beautiful,  
 The wildest and bloodiest is over, and all is peace.

## 18

<sup>52</sup> Peace is always beautiful,  
 The myth of heaven indicates peace and night.

<sup>53</sup> The myth of heaven indicates the Soul ;  
 The Soul is always beautiful—it appears more or it  
 appears less—it comes, or it lags behind,  
 It comes from its embower'd garden, and looks pleas-  
 antly on itself, and encloses the world,  
 Perfect and clean the genitals previously jetting, and  
 perfect and clean the womb cohering,  
 The head well-grown, proportion'd and plumb, and the  
 bowels and joints proportion'd and plumb.

## 19

<sup>54</sup> The Soul is always beautiful,  
The universe is duly in order, everything is in its place,  
What has arrived is in its place, and what waits is in  
its place ;  
The twisted skull waits, the watery or rotten blood  
waits,  
The child of the glutton or venerealee waits long, and  
the child of the drunkard waits long, and the  
drunkard himself waits long,  
The sleepers that lived and died wait—the far advanced  
are to go on in their turns, and the far behind  
are to come on in their turns,  
The diverse shall be no less diverse, but they shall  
flow and unite—they unite now.

## 20

<sup>55</sup> The sleepers are very beautiful as they lie unclothed,  
They flow hand in hand over the whole earth, from  
east to west, as they lie unclothed,  
The Asiatic and African are hand in hand—the Euro-  
pean and American are hand in hand,  
Learn'd and unlearn'd are hand in hand, and male and  
female are hand in hand,  
The bare arm of the girl crosses the bare breast of her  
lover—they press close without lust—his lips  
press her neck,  
The father holds his grown or ungrown son in his arms  
with measureless love, and the son holds the  
father in his arms with measureless love,  
The white hair of the mother shines on the white wrist  
of the daughter,  
The breath of the boy goes with the breath of the man,  
friend is inarm'd by friend,  
The scholar kisses the teacher, and the teacher kisses  
the scholar—the wrong'd is made right,  
The call of the slave is one with the master's call, and  
the master salutes the slave,



The felon steps forth from the prison—the insane becomes sane—the suffering of sick persons is reliev'd,

The sweatings and fevers stop—the throat that was unsound is sound—the lungs of the consumptive are resumed—the poor distress'd head is free,

The joints of the rheumatic move as smoothly as ever, and smoother than ever,

Stiflings and passages open—the paralyzed become supple,

The swell'd and convuls'd and congested awake to themselves in condition,

They pass the invigoration of the night, and the chemistry of the night, and awake.

## 21

<sup>56</sup> I too pass from the night,  
I stay a while away, O night, but I return to you again,  
and love you.

<sup>57</sup> Why should I be afraid to trust myself to you?  
I am not afraid—I have been well brought forward by  
you ;  
I love the rich running day, but I do not desert her in  
whom I lay so long,  
I know not how I came of you, and I know not where  
I go with you—but I know I came well, and shall  
go well.

<sup>58</sup> I will stop only a time with the night, and rise be-  
times ;  
I will duly pass the day, O my mother, and duly return  
to you.

## CAROL OF WORDS.

1

<sup>1</sup> EARTH, round, rolling, compact—suns, moons, animals—all these are words to be said ;  
Watery, vegetable, sauroid advances—beings, premonitions, lispings of the future,  
Behold ! these are vast words to be said.

<sup>2</sup> Were you thinking that those were the words—those upright lines ? those curves, angles, dots ?  
No, those are not the words—the substantial words are in the ground and sea,  
They are in the air—they are in you.

<sup>3</sup> Were you thinking that those were the words—those delicious sounds out of your friends' mouths ?  
No, the real words are more delicious than they.

<sup>4</sup> Human bodies are words, myriads of words ;  
In the best poems re-appears the body, man's or woman's, well-shaped, natural, gay,  
Every part able, active, receptive, without shame or the need of shame.

2

<sup>5</sup> Air, soil, water, fire—these are words ;  
I myself am a word with them—my qualities interpenetrate with theirs—my name is nothing to them ;

Though it were told in the three thousand languages,  
what would air, soil, water, fire, know of my  
name?

<sup>6</sup> A healthy presence, a friendly or commanding gesture,  
are words, sayings, meanings;  
The charms that go with the mere looks of some men  
and women, are sayings and meanings also.

## 3

<sup>7</sup> The workmanship of souls is by the inaudible words  
of the earth;  
The great masters know the earth's words, and use  
them more than the audible words.

<sup>8</sup> Amelioration is one of the earth's words;  
The earth neither lags nor hastens;  
It has all attributes, growths, effects, latent in itself  
from the jump;  
It is not half beautiful only—defects and excrescences  
show just as much as perfections show.

<sup>9</sup> The earth does not withhold, it is generous enough;  
The truths of the earth continually wait, they are not  
so conceal'd either;  
They are calm, subtle, untransmissible by print;  
They are imbued through all things, conveying themselves  
willingly,  
Conveying a sentiment and invitation of the earth—I  
utter and utter,  
I speak not, yet if you hear me not, of what avail am I  
to you?  
To bear—to better—lacking these, of what avail am I?

## 4

<sup>10</sup> Accouche! Accouchez!  
Will you rot your own fruit in yourself there?  
Will you squat and stifle there?

<sup>11</sup> The earth does not argue,

Is not pathetic, has no arrangements,  
Does not scream, haste, persuade, threaten, promise,  
Makes no discriminations, has no conceivable failures,  
Closes nothing, refuses nothing, shuts none out,  
Of all the powers, objects, states, it notifies, shuts none  
out.

## 5

<sup>12</sup> The earth does not exhibit itself, nor refuse to exhibit itself—possesses still underneath ;  
Underneath the ostensible sounds, the august chorus  
of heroes, the wail of slaves,  
Persuasions of lovers, curses, gasps of the dying,  
laughter of young people, accents of bargainers,  
Underneath these, possessing the words that never  
fail.

<sup>13</sup> To her children, the words of the eloquent dumb  
great mother never fail ;  
The true words do not fail, for motion does not fail,  
and reflection does not fail ;  
Also the day and night do not fail, and the voyage we  
pursue does not fail.

## 6

<sup>14</sup> Of the interminable sisters,  
Of the ceaseless cotillions of sisters,  
Of the centripetal and centrifugal sisters, the elder and  
younger sisters,  
The beautiful sister we know dances on with the rest.

<sup>15</sup> With her ample back towards every beholder,  
With the fascinations of youth, and the equal fascinations  
of age,  
Sits she whom I too love like the rest—sits undisturb'd,  
Holding up in her hand what has the character of a  
mirror, while her eyes glance back from it,

Glance as she sits, inviting none, denying none,  
Holding a mirror day and night tirelessly before her  
own face.

## 7

<sup>16</sup> Seen at hand, or seen at a distance,  
Duly the twenty-four appear in public every day,  
Duly approach and pass with their companions, or a  
companion,  
Looking from no countenances of their own, but from  
the countenances of those who are with them,  
From the countenances of children or women, or the  
manly countenance,  
From the open countenances of animals, or from inani-  
mate things,  
From the landscape or waters, or from the exquisite  
apparition of the sky,  
From our countenances, mine and yours, faithfully re-  
turning them,  
Every day in public appearing without fail, but never  
twice with the same companions.

## 8

<sup>17</sup> Embracing man, embracing all, proceed the three  
hundred and sixty-five resistlessly round the  
sun ;  
Embracing all, soothing, supporting, follow close three  
hundred and sixty-five offsets of the first, sure  
and necessary as they.

## 9

<sup>18</sup> Tumbling on steadily, nothing dreading,  
Sunshine, storm, cold, heat, forever withstanding, pass-  
ing, carrying,  
The Soul's realization and determination still inherit-  
ing,  
The fluid vacuum around and ahead still entering and  
dividing,



No balk retarding, no anchor anchoring, on no rock  
 striking,  
 Swift, glad, content, unbereav'd, nothing losing,  
 Of all able and ready at any time to give strict ac-  
 count,  
 The divine ship sails the divine sea.

## 10

<sup>19</sup> Whoever you are! motion and reflection are especi-  
 ally for you ;  
 The divine ship sails the divine sea for you.

<sup>20</sup> Whoever you are! you are he or she for whom the  
 earth is solid and liquid,  
 You are he or she for whom the sun and moon hang in  
 the sky,  
 For none more than you are the present and the past,  
 For none more than you is immortality.

## 11

<sup>21</sup> Each man to himself, and each woman to herself,  
 such is the word of the past and present, and  
 the word of immortality ;  
 No one can acquire for another—not one!  
 Not one can grow for another—not one!

<sup>22</sup> The song is to the singer, and comes back most to  
 him ;  
 The teaching is to the teacher, and comes back most to  
 him ;  
 The murder is to the murderer, and comes back most  
 to him ;  
 The theft is to the thief, and comes back most to him ;  
 The love is to the lover, and comes back most to him ;  
 The gift is to the giver, and comes back most to him—  
 it cannot fail ;  
 The oration is to the orator, the acting is to the actor  
 and actress, not to the audience ;  
 And no man understands any greatness or goodness  
 but his own, or the indication of his own.

## 12

<sup>23</sup> I swear the earth shall surely be complete to him or her who shall be complete !

I swear the earth remains jagged and broken only to him or her who remains jagged and broken !

<sup>24</sup> I swear there is no greatness or power that does not emulate those of the earth !

I swear there can be no theory of any account, unless it corroborate the theory of the earth !

No politics, art, religion, behavior, or what not, is of account, unless it compare with the amplitude of the earth,

Unless it face the exactness, vitality, impartiality, rectitude of the earth.

## 13

<sup>25</sup> I swear I begin to see love with sweeter spasms than that which responds love !

It is that which contains itself—which never invites, and never refuses.

<sup>26</sup> I swear I begin to see little or nothing in audible words !

I swear I think all merges toward the presentation of the unspoken meanings of the earth !

Toward him who sings the songs of the Body, and of the truths of the earth ;

Toward him who makes the dictionaries of words that print cannot touch.

## 14

<sup>27</sup> I swear I see what is better than to tell the best ;  
It is always to leave the best untold.

<sup>28</sup> When I undertake to tell the best, I find I cannot,  
My tongue is ineffectual on its pivots,  
My breath will not be obedient to its organs,  
I become a dumb man.

<sup>29</sup> The best of the earth cannot be told anyhow—all or  
any is best ;  
It is not what you anticipated—it is cheaper, easier,  
nearer ;  
Things are not dismiss'd from the places they held  
before ;  
The earth is just as positive and direct as it was before ;  
Facts, religions, improvements, politics, trades, are as  
real as before ;  
But the Soul is also real,—it too is positive and direct ;  
No reasoning, no proof has establish'd it,  
Undeniable growth has establish'd it.

## 15

<sup>30</sup> This is a poem—a carol of words—these are hints of  
meanings,  
These are to echo the tones of Souls, and the phrases  
of Souls ;  
If they did not echo the phrases of Souls, what were  
they then ?  
If they had not reference to you in especial, what were  
they then ?

<sup>31</sup> I swear I will never henceforth have to do with the  
faith that tells the best !  
I will have to do only with that faith that leaves the  
best untold.

## 16

<sup>32</sup> Say on, sayers !  
Delve ! mould ! pile the words of the earth !  
Work on—(it is materials you must bring, not breaths ;)   
Work on, age after age ! nothing is to be lost ;  
It may have to wait long, but it will certainly come in  
use ;  
When the materials are all prepared, the architects  
shall appear.

<sup>33</sup> I swear to you the architects shall appear without  
fail ! I announce them and lead them ;

I swear to you they will understand you, and justify you ;

I swear to you the greatest among them shall be he who best knows you, and encloses all, and is faithful to all ;

I swear to you, he and the rest shall not forget you—they shall perceive that you are not an iota less than they ;

I swear to you, you shall be glorified in them.

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### Ah Poverties, Wincings, and Sulky Retreats.

AH poverties, wincings, and sulky retreats !

Ah you foes that in conflict have overcome me !

(For what is my life, or any man's life, but a conflict with foes—the old, the incessant war?)

You degradations—you tussle with passions and appetites ;

You smarts from dissatisfied friendships, (ah wounds, the sharpest of all ;)

You toil of painful and choked articulations—you meanesses ;

You shallow tongue-talks at tables, (my tongue the shallowest of any ;)

You broken resolutions, you racking angers, you smother'd ennuis ;

Ah, think not you finally triumph—My real self has yet to come forth ;

It shall yet march forth o'ermastering, till all lies beneath me ;

It shall yet stand up the soldier of unquestion'd victory.

# LEAVES OF GRASS.



## A BOSTON BALLAD.

(1854.)

<sup>1</sup> To get betimes in Boston town, I rose this morning  
early;  
Here's a good place at the corner—I must stand and  
see the show.

<sup>2</sup> Clear the way there, Jonathan!  
Way for the President's marshal! Way for the govern-  
ment cannon!  
Way for the Federal foot and dragoons—and the appa-  
ritions copiously tumbling.

<sup>3</sup> I love to look on the stars and stripes—I hope the  
fifes will play Yankee Doodle.

<sup>4</sup> How bright shine the cutlasses of the foremost troops!  
Every man holds his revolver, marching stiff through  
Boston town.

<sup>5</sup> A fog follows—antiques of the same come limping,  
Some appear wooden-legged, and some appear ban-  
daged and bloodless.

<sup>6</sup> Why this is indeed a show! It has called the dead out  
of the earth!  
The old grave-yards of the hills have hurried to see!  
Phantoms! phantoms countless by flank and rear!  
Cock'd hats of mothy mould! crutches made of mist!  
Arms in slings! old men leaning on young men's shoul-  
ders!



<sup>7</sup> What troubles you, Yankee phantoms? What is all  
this chattering of bare gums?

Does the ague convulse your limbs? Do you mistake  
your crutches for fire-locks, and level them?

<sup>8</sup> If you blind your eyes with tears, you will not see the  
President's marshal;

If you groan such groans, you might balk the govern-  
ment cannon.

<sup>9</sup> For shame old maniacs! Bring down those toss'd  
arms, and let your white hair be;

Here gape your great grand-sons—their wives gaze at  
them from the windows,

See how well dress'd—see how orderly they conduct  
themselves.

<sup>10</sup> Worse and worse! Can't you stand it? Are you  
retreating?

Is this hour with the living too dead for you?

<sup>11</sup> Retreat then! Pell-mell!

To your graves! Back! back to the hills, old limpers!  
I do not think you belong here, anyhow.

<sup>12</sup> But there is one thing that belongs here—shall I tell  
you what it is, gentlemen of Boston?

<sup>13</sup> I will whisper it to the Mayor—he shall send a com-  
mittee to England;

They shall get a grant from the Parliament, go with a  
cart to the royal vault—haste!

Dig out King George's coffin, unwrap him quick from  
the grave-clothes, box up his bones for a journey;

Find a swift Yankee clipper—here is freight for you,  
black-bellied clipper,

Up with your anchor! shake out your sails! steer  
straight toward Boston bay.

<sup>14</sup> Now call for the President's marshal again, bring out  
the government cannon,

Fetch home the roarers from Congress, make another procession, guard it with foot and dragoons.

<sup>15</sup> This centre-piece for them :

Look! all orderly citizens—look from the windows, women!

<sup>16</sup> The committee open the box, set up the regal ribs, glue those that will not stay,

Clap the skull on top of the ribs, and clap a crown on top of the skull.

<sup>17</sup> You have got your revenge, old buster! The crown is come to its own, and more than its own.

<sup>18</sup> Stick your hands in your pockets, Jonathan—you are a made man from this day ;

You are mighty cute—and here is one of your bargains.



## YEAR OF METEORS.

(1859-60.)

YEAR of meteors! brooding year!

I would bind in words retrospective, some of your deeds and signs ;

I would sing your contest for the 19th Presidentiad ;

I would sing how an old man, tall, with white hair, mounted the scaffold in Virginia ;

(I was at hand—silent I stood, with teeth shut close—I watch'd ;

I stood very near you, old man, when cool and indifferent, but trembling with age and your unheal'd wounds, you mounted the scaffold ;) )

—I would sing in my copious song your census returns of The States,

The tables of population and products—I would sing of your ships and their cargoes,

The proud black ships of Manhattan, arriving, some  
fill'd with immigrants, some from the isthmus  
with cargoes of gold ;  
Songs thereof would I sing—to all that hitherward  
comes would I welcome give ;  
And you would I sing, fair stripling! welcome to you  
from me, sweet boy of England!  
Remember you surging Manhattan's crowds, as you  
pass'd with your cortege of nobles?  
There in the crowds stood I, and singled you out with  
attachment ;  
I know not why, but I loved you . . . (and so go forth  
little song,  
Far over sea speed like an arrow, carrying my love all  
folded,  
And find in his palace the youth I love, and drop these  
lines at his feet ;)  
—Nor forget I to sing of the wonder, the ship as she  
swam up my bay,  
Well-shaped and stately the Great Eastern swam up my  
bay, she was 600 feet long,  
Her, moving swiftly, surrounded by myriads of small  
craft, I forget not to sing ;  
—Nor the comet that came unannounced, out of the  
north, flaring in heaven ;  
Nor the strange huge meteor procession, dazzling and  
clear, shooting over our heads,  
(A moment, a moment long, it sail'd its balls of un-  
earthly light over our heads,  
Then departed, dropt in the night, and was gone ;)  
—Of such, and fitful as they, I sing—with gleams from  
them would I gleam and patch these chants ;  
Your chants, O year all mottled with evil and good!  
year of forebodings! year of the youth I love!  
Year of comets and meteors transient and strange!—lo!  
even here, one equally transient and strange!  
As I flit through you hastily, soon to fall and be gone,  
what is this book,  
What am I myself but one of your meteors?

## A BROADWAY PAGEANT.

RECEPTION JAPANESE EMBASSY, JUNE, 1860.

1

<sup>1</sup> OVER the western sea, hither from Nippon come,  
Courteous, the swart-cheek'd, two-sworded envoys,  
Leaning back in their open barouches, bare-headed,  
          impassive,  
Ride to-day through Manhattan.

<sup>2</sup> Libertad!  
I do not know whether others behold what I behold,  
In the procession, along with the nobles of Asia, the  
          errand-bearers,  
Bringing up the rear, hovering above, around, or in the  
          ranks marching;  
But I will sing you a song of what I behold, Libertad.

2

<sup>3</sup> When million-footed Manhattan, unpent, descends to  
          her pavements;  
When the thunder-cracking guns arouse me with the  
          proud roar I love;  
When the round-mouth'd guns, out of the smoke and  
          smell I love, spit their salutes;

When the fire-flashing guns have fully alerted me—  
 when heaven-clouds canopy my city with a  
 delicate thin haze ;  
 When, gorgeous, the countless straight stems, the for-  
 ests at the wharves, thicken with colors ;  
 When every ship, richly drest, carries her flag at the  
 peak ;  
 When pennants trail, and street-festoons hang from the  
 windows ;  
 When Broadway is entirely given up to foot-passengers  
 and foot-standers—when the mass is densest ;  
 When the façades of the houses are alive with people—  
 when eyes gaze, riveted, tens of thousands at a  
 time ;  
 When the guests from the islands advance—when the  
 pageant moves forward, visible ;  
 When the summons is made—when the answer that  
 waited thousands of years, answers ;  
 I too, arising, answering, descend to the pavements,  
 merge with the crowd, and gaze with them.

## 3

<sup>4</sup> Superb-faced Manhattan !  
 Comrade Americanos!—to us, then, at last, the Orient  
 comes.

<sup>5</sup> To us, my city,  
 Where our tall-topt marble and iron beauties range on  
 opposite sides—to walk in the space between,  
 To-day our Antipodes comes.

<sup>6</sup> The Oringatress comes,  
 The nest of languages, the bequeather of poems, the  
 race of eld,  
 Florid with blood, pensive, rapt with musings, hot with  
 passion,  
 Sultry with perfume, with ample and flowing garments,  
 With sunburnt visage, with intense soul and glittering  
 eyes,  
 The race of Brahma comes !



## 4

<sup>7</sup> See, my cantabile! these, and more, are flashing to us  
from the procession ;

As it moves, changing, a kaleidoscope divine it moves,  
changing, before us.

<sup>8</sup> For not the envoys, nor the tann'd Japanee from his  
island only ;

Lithe and silent, the Hindoo appears—the Asiatic con-  
tinent itself appears—the Past, the dead,

The murky night-morning of wonder and fable, inscru-  
table,

The envelop'd mysteries, the old and unknown hive-  
bees,

The North—the sweltering South—eastern Assyria—  
the Hebrews—the Ancient of Ancients,

Vast desolated cities—the gliding Present—all of these,  
and more, are in the pageant-procession.

<sup>9</sup> Geography, the world, is in it ;

The Great Sea, the brood of islands, Polynesia, the  
coast beyond ;

The coast you, henceforth, are facing—you Libertad!  
from your Western golden shores

The countries there, with their populations—the mil-  
lions en-masse, are curiously here ;

The swarming market places—the temples, with idols  
ranged along the sides, or at the end—bonze,  
brahmin, and lama ;

The mandarin, farmer, merchant, mechanic, and fisher-  
man ;

The singing-girl and the dancing-girl—the ecstatic  
person—the secluded Emperors,

Confucius himself—the great poets and heroes—the  
warriors, the castes, all,

Trooping up, crowding from all directions—from the  
Altay mountains,

From Thibet—from the four winding and far-flowing  
rivers of China,

From the Southern peninsulas, and the demi-conti-  
nental islands—from Malaysia ;

These, and whatever belongs to them, palpable, show  
 forth to me, and are seiz'd by me,  
 And I am seiz'd by them, and friendly held by them,  
 Till, as here, them all I chant, Libertad ! for themselves  
 and for you.

## 5

<sup>10</sup> For I too, raising my voice, join the ranks of this  
 pageant ;  
 I am the chanter—I chant aloud over the pageant ;  
 I chant the world on my Western Sea ;  
 I chant, copious, the islands beyond, thick as stars in  
 the sky ;  
 I chant the new empire, grander than any before—As  
 in a vision it comes to me ;  
 I chant America, the Mistress—I chant a greater su-  
 premacy ;  
 I chant, projected, a thousand blooming cities yet, in  
 time, on those groups of sea-islands ;  
 I chant my sail-ships and steam-ships threading the  
 archipelagoes ;  
 I chant my stars and stripes fluttering in the wind ;  
 I chant commerce opening, the sleep of ages having  
 done its work—races, reborn, refresh'd ;  
 Lives, works, resumed—The object I know not—but  
 the old, the Asiatic, renew'd, as it must be,  
 Commencing from this day, surrounded by the world.

## 6

<sup>11</sup> And you, Libertad of the world !  
 You shall sit in the middle, well-pois'd, thousands of  
 years ;  
 As to-day, from one side, the nobles of Asia come to  
 you ;  
 As to-morrow, from the other side, the Queen of Eng-  
 land sends her eldest son to you.

## 7

<sup>12</sup> The sign is reversing, the orb is enclosed,  
 The ring is circled, the journey is done ;

The box-lid is but perceptibly open'd—nevertheless the  
perfume pours copiously out of the whole box.

## 8

<sup>13</sup> Young Libertad!

With the venerable Asia, the all-mother,  
Be considerate with her, now and ever, hot Libertad—  
for you are all ;

Bend your proud neck to the long-off mother, now  
sending messages over the archipelagoes to you ;  
Bend your proud neck low for once, young Libertad.

## 9

<sup>14</sup> Were the children straying westward so long? so  
wide the tramping?

Were the precedent dim ages debouching westward  
from Paradise so long ?

Were the centuries steadily footing it that way, all the  
while unknown, for you, for reasons ?

<sup>15</sup> They are justified—they are accomplish'd—they shall  
now be turn'd the other way also, to travel to-  
ward you thence ;

They shall now also march obediently eastward, for  
your sake, Libertad.

## SUGGESTIONS.

## 1

THAT whatever tastes sweet to the most perfect person  
—That is finally right.

## 2

That the human shape or face is so great, it must never  
be made ridiculous ; -

That for ornaments nothing outré can be allowed,

That anything is most beautiful without ornament ;

That exaggerations will be sternly revenged in your  
own physiology, and in other persons' physiology  
also ;

That clean-shaped children can be jetted and conceiv'd  
only where natural forms prevail in public, and  
the human face and form are never caricatured ;

And that genius need never more be turn'd to romances,

(For facts properly told, how mean appear all romances.)

## 3

I have said many times that materials and the Soul are  
great, and that all depends on physique ;

Now I reverse what I said, and suggest that all depends  
on the æsthetic, or intellectual,

And that criticism is great—and that refinement is  
greatest of all ;

And that the mind governs—and that all depends on  
the mind.

## 4

With one man or woman—(no matter which one—I  
even pick out the lowest,)

With him or her I now suggest the whole law ;

And that every right, in politics or what-not, shall be  
eligible to that one man or woman, on the same  
terms as any.

## GREAT ARE THE MYTHS.

---

### 1

<sup>1</sup> GREAT are the myths—I too delight in them ;  
Great are Adam and Eve—I too look back and accept  
them ;  
Great the risen and fallen nations, and their poets,  
women, sages, inventors, rulers, warriors, and  
priests.

<sup>2</sup> Great is Liberty ! great is Equality ! I am their fol-  
lower ;  
Helmsmen of nations, choose your craft ! where you  
sail, I sail,  
I weather it out with you, or sink with you.

<sup>3</sup> Great is Youth—equally great is Old Age—great are  
the Day and Night ;  
Great is Wealth—great is Poverty—great is Expres-  
sion—great is Silence.

<sup>4</sup> Youth, large, lusty, loving—Youth, full of grace, force,  
fascination !  
Do you know that Old Age may come after you, with  
equal grace, force, fascination ?

<sup>5</sup> Day, full-blown and splendid—Day of the immense  
sun, action, ambition, laughter,  
The Night follows close, with millions of suns, and  
sleep, and restoring darkness.



<sup>6</sup> Wealth, with the flush hand, fine clothes, hospitality ;  
But then the Soul's wealth, which is candor, knowledge, pride, enfolding love ;  
(Who goes for men and women showing Poverty richer than wealth ?)

<sup>7</sup> Expression of speech ! in what is written or said, forget not that Silence is also expressive,  
That anguish as hot as the hottest, and contempt as cold as the coldest, may be without words.

## 2

<sup>8</sup> Great is the Earth, and the way it became what it is ;  
Do you imagine it has stopt at this ? the increase abandon'd ?

Understand then that it goes as far onward from this,  
as this is from the times when it lay in covering waters and gases, before man had appear'd.

<sup>9</sup> Great is the quality of Truth in man ;  
The quality of truth in man supports itself through all changes,  
It is inevitably in the man—he and it are in love, and never leave each other.

<sup>10</sup> The truth in man is no dictum, it is vital as eyesight ;  
If there be any Soul, there is truth—if there be man or woman there is truth—if there be physical or moral, there is truth ;  
If there be equilibrium or volition, there is truth—if there be things at all upon the earth, there is truth.

<sup>11</sup> O truth of the earth ! I am determin'd to press my way toward you ;  
Sound your voice ! I scale mountains, or dive in the sea after you.

3

<sup>12</sup> Great is Language—it is the mightiest of the sciences,

It is the fulness, color, form, diversity of the earth, and of men and women, and of all qualities and processes ;

It is greater than wealth—it is greater than buildings, ships, religions, paintings, music.

<sup>13</sup> Great is the English speech—what speech is so great as the English ?

Great is the English brood—what brood has so vast a destiny as the English ?

It is the mother of the brood that must rule the earth with the new rule ;

The new rule shall rule as the Soul rules, and as the love, justice, equality in the Soul rule.

<sup>14</sup> Great is Law—great are the few old land-marks of the law,

They are the same in all times, and shall not be disturb'd.

4

<sup>15</sup> Great is Justice !

Justice is not settled by legislators and laws—it is in the Soul ;

It cannot be varied by statutes, any more than love, pride, the attraction of gravity, can ;

It is immutable—it does not depend on majorities—majorities or what not, come at last before the same passionless and exact tribunal.

<sup>16</sup> For justice are the grand natural lawyers, and perfect judges—is it in their Souls ;

It is well assorted—they have not studied for nothing—the great includes the less ;

They rule on the highest grounds—they oversee all eras, states, administrations.

- <sup>17</sup> The perfect judge fears nothing—he could go front to front before God ;  
Before the perfect judge all shall stand back—life and death shall stand back—heaven and hell shall stand back.

## 5

- <sup>18</sup> Great is Life, real and mystical, wherever and whoever ;  
Great is Death—sure as life holds all parts together, Death holds all parts together.
- <sup>19</sup> Has Life much purport?—Ah, Death has the greatest purport.



## Thought.

OF persons arrived at high positions, ceremonies, wealth, scholarships, and the like ;  
To me, all that those persons have arrived at, sinks away from them, except as it results to their Bodies and Souls,  
So that often to me they appear gaunt and naked ;  
And often, to me, each one mocks the others, and mocks himself or herself,  
And of each one, the core of life, namely happiness, is full of the rotten excrement of maggots,  
And often, to me, those men and women pass unwittingly the true realities of life, and go toward false realities,  
And often, to me, they are alive after what custom has served them, but nothing more,  
And often, to me, they are sad, hasty, unwaked sonnambules, walking the dusk.

## LEAVES OF GRASS.

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### THERE WAS A CHILD WENT FORTH.

<sup>1</sup> THERE was a child went forth every day ;  
And the first object he look'd upon, that object he  
became ;

And that object became part of him for the day, or a  
certain part of the day, or for many years, or  
stretching cycles of years.

<sup>2</sup> The early lilacs became part of this child,  
And grass, and white and red morning-glories, and  
white and red clover, and the song of the phœbe-  
bird,

And the Third-month lambs, and the sow's pink-faint  
litter, and the mare's foal, and the cow's calf,  
And the noisy brood of the barn-yard, or by the mire  
of the pond-side,

And the fish suspending themselves so curiously below  
there—and the beautiful curious liquid,  
And the water-plants with their graceful flat heads—all  
became part of him.

<sup>3</sup> The field-sprouts of Fourth-month and Fifth-month  
became part of him ;

Winter-grain sprouts, and those of the light-yellow  
corn, and the esculent roots of the garden,  
And the apple-trees cover'd with blossoms, and the fruit  
afterward, and wood-berries, and the commonest  
weeds by the road ;

And the old drunkard staggering home from the out-  
house of the tavern, whence he had lately risen,  
And the school-mistress that pass'd on her way to the  
school,  
And the friendly boys that pass'd—and the quarrelsome  
boys,  
And the tidy and fresh-cheek'd girls—and the barefoot  
negro boy and girl,  
And all the changes of city and country, wherever he  
went.

<sup>4</sup> His own parents,  
He that had father'd him, and she that had conceiv'd  
him in her womb, and birth'd him,  
They gave this child more of themselves than that ;  
They gave him afterward every day—they became part  
of him.

<sup>5</sup> The mother at home, quietly placing the dishes on  
the supper-table ;  
The mother with mild words—clean her cap and gown,  
a wholesome odor falling off her person and  
clothes as she walks by ;  
The father, strong, self-sufficient, manly, mean, anger'd,  
unjust ;  
The blow, the quick loud word, the tight bargain, the  
crafty lure,  
The family usages, the language, the company, the fur-  
niture—the yearning and swelling heart,  
Affection that will not be gainsay'd—the sense of what  
is real—the thought if, after all, it should prove  
unreal,  
The doubts of day-time and the doubts of night-time—  
the curious whether and how,  
Whether that which appears so is so, or is it all flashes  
and specks ?  
Men and women crowding fast in the streets—if they  
are not flashes and specks, what are they ?  
The streets themselves, and the façades of houses, and  
goods in the windows,



Vehicles, teams, the heavy-plank'd wharves—the huge  
crossing at the ferries,  
The village on the highland, seen from afar at sunset—  
the river between,  
Shadows, aureola and mist, the light falling on roofs  
and gables of white or brown, three miles off,  
The schooner near by, sleepily dropping down the tide  
—the little boat slack-tow'd astern,  
The hurrying tumbling waves, quick-broken crests,  
slapping,  
The strata of color'd clouds, the long bar of maroon-  
tint, away solitary by itself—the spread of purity  
it lies motionless in,  
The horizon's edge, the flying sea-crow, the fragrance  
of salt marsh and shore mud ;  
These became part of that child who went forth every  
day, and who now goes, and will always go forth  
every day.

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## LONGINGS FOR HOME.

O MAGNET-SOUTH ! O glistening, perfumed South ! My  
South !  
O quick mettle, rich blood, impulse, and love ! Good  
and evil ! O all dear to me !  
O dear to me my birth-things—All moving things, and  
the trees where I was born—the grains, plants,  
rivers ;  
Dear to me my own slow sluggish rivers where they  
flow, distant, over flats of silvery sands, or  
through swamps ;  
Dear to me the Roanoke, the Savannah, the Altamahaw,  
the Pedee, the Tombigbee, the Santee, the Coosa,  
and the Sabine ;  
O pensive, far away wandering, I return with my Soul  
to haunt their banks again ;  
Again in Florida I float on transparent lakes—I float  
on the Okeechobee—I cross the hummock land,  
or through pleasant openings, or dense forests ;

I see the parrots in the woods—I see the papaw tree  
and the blossoming titi ;  
Again, sailing in my coaster, on deck, I coast off  
Georgia—I coast up the Carolinas,  
I see where the live-oak is growing—I see where the  
yellow-pine, the scented bay-tree, the lemon and  
orange, the cypress, the graceful palmetto ;  
I pass rude sea-headlands and enter Pamlico Sound  
through an inlet, and dart my vision inland ;  
O the cotton plant! the growing fields of rice, sugar,  
hemp !  
The cactus, guarded with thorns—the laurel-tree, with  
large white flowers ;  
The range afar—the richness and barrenness—the old  
woods charged with mistletoe and trailing moss,  
The piney odor and the gloom—the awful natural still-  
ness, (Here in these dense swamps the freebooter  
carries his gun, and the fugitive slave has his  
conceal'd hut ;)   
O the strange fascination of these half-known, half-  
impassable swamps, infested by reptiles, resound-  
ing with the bellow of the alligator, the sad  
noises of the night-owl and the wild-cat, and the  
whirr of the rattlesnake ;  
The mocking-bird, the American mimic, singing all the  
forenoon—singing through the moon-lit night,  
The humming-bird, the wild turkey, the raccoon, the  
opossum ;  
A Tennessee corn-field—the tall, graceful, long-leav'd  
corn—slender, flapping, bright green, with tas-  
sels—with beautiful ears, each well-sheath'd in  
its husk ;  
An Arkansas prairie—a sleeping lake, or still bayou ;  
O my heart! O tender and fierce pangs—I can stand  
them not—I will depart ;  
O to be a Virginian, where I grew up! O to be a Caro-  
linian!  
O longings irrepressible! O I will go back to old Ten-  
nessee, and never wander more!

## THINK OF THE SOUL.

<sup>1</sup> THINK of the Soul ;

I swear to you that body of yours gives proportions to  
your Soul somehow to live in other spheres ;  
I do not know how, but I know it is so.

<sup>2</sup> Think of loving and being loved ;

I swear to you, whoever you are, you can interfuse your-  
self with such things that everybody that sees  
you shall look longingly upon you.

<sup>3</sup> Think of the past ;

I warn you that in a little while others will find their  
past in you and your times.

<sup>4</sup> The race is never separated—nor man nor woman  
escapes ;

All is inextricable—things, spirits, Nature, nations, you  
too—from precedents you come.

<sup>5</sup> Recall the ever-welcome defiers, (The mothers pre-  
cede them ;)

Recall the sages, poets, saviors, inventors, lawgivers, of  
the earth ;

Recall Christ, brother of rejected persons—brother of  
slaves, felons, idiots, and of insane and diseas'd  
persons.

<sup>6</sup> Think of the time when you were not yet born ;

Think of times you stood at the side of the dying ;

Think of the time when your own body will be dying.

<sup>7</sup> Think of spiritual results,

Sure as the earth swims through the heavens, does every  
one of its objects pass into spiritual results.

<sup>8</sup> Think of manhood, and you to be a man ;

Do you count manhood, and the sweet of manhood,  
nothing?

<sup>9</sup> Think of womanhood, and you to be a woman ;  
The creation is womanhood ;  
Have I not said that womanhood involves all ?  
Have I not told how the universe has nothing better  
than the best womanhood ?

---

### You Felons on Trial in Courts.

<sup>1</sup> You felons on trial in courts ;  
You convicts in prison-cells—you sentenced assassins,  
chain'd and hand-cuff'd with iron ;  
Who am I, too, that I am not on trial, or in prison ?  
Me, ruthless and devilish as any, that my wrists are not  
chain'd with iron, or my ankles with iron ?

<sup>2</sup> You prostitutes flaunting over the trottoirs, or obscene  
in your rooms,  
Who am I, that I should call you more obscene than  
myself ?

<sup>3</sup> O culpable !  
I acknowledge—I exposé !  
(O admirers ! praise not me ! compliment not me ! you  
make me wince,  
I see what you do not—I know what you do not.)

<sup>4</sup> Inside these breast-bones I lie smutch'd and choked ;  
Beneath this face that appears so impassive, hell's tides  
continually run ;  
Lusts and wickedness are acceptable to me ;  
I walk with delinquents with passionate love ;  
I feel I am of them—I belong to those convicts and  
prostitutes myself,  
And henceforth I will not deny them—for how can I  
deny myself ?

## To a Common Prostitute.

- <sup>1</sup> BE composed—be at ease with me—I am Walt Whitman, liberal and lusty as Nature ;  
Not till the sun excludes you, do I exclude you ;  
Not till the waters refuse to glisten for you, and the  
leaves to rustle for you, do my words refuse to  
glisten and rustle for you.
- <sup>2</sup> My girl, I appoint with you an appointment—and I  
charge you that you make preparation to be  
worthy to meet me,  
And I charge you that you be patient and perfect till I  
come.
- <sup>3</sup> Till then, I salute you with a significant look, that  
you do not forget me.
- 

## I was Looking a Long While.

I WAS looking a long while for a clue to the history of  
the past for myself, and for these chants—and  
now I have found it ;  
It is not in those paged fables in the libraries, (them I  
neither accept nor reject ;)  
It is no more in the legends than in all else ;  
It is in the present—it is this earth to-day ;  
It is in Democracy—(the purport and aim of all the  
past ;)  
It is the life of one man or one woman to-day—the av-  
erage man of to-day ;  
It is in languages, social customs, literatures, arts ;  
It is in the broad show of artificial things, ships, ma-  
chinery, politics, creeds, modern improvements,  
and the interchange of nations,  
All for the average man of to-day.



## To a President.

ALL you are doing and saying is to America dangled  
 mirages ;  
 You have not learn'd of Nature—of the politics of Na-  
 ture, you have not learn'd the great amplitude,  
 rectitude, impartiality ;  
 You have not seen that only such as they are for These  
 States,  
 And that what is less than they, must sooner or later  
 lift off from These States.



## TO THE STATES,

To Identify the 16th, 17th, or 18th Presidentiad.

WHY reclining, interrogating? Why myself and all  
 drowsing?  
 What deepening twilight! scum floating atop of the  
 waters!  
 Who are they, as bats and night-dogs, askant in the  
 Capitol?  
 What a filthy Presidentiad! (O south, your torrid suns!  
 O north, your arctic freezings!)  
 Are those really Congressmen? are those the great  
 Judges? is that the President?  
 Then I will sleep awhile yet—for I see that These States  
 sleep, for reasons ;  
 (With gathering murk—with muttering thunder and  
 lambent shoots, we all duly awake,  
 South, north, east, west, inland and seaboard, we will  
 surely awake.)

## DRUM-TAPS.



*Aroused and angry,  
I thought to beat the alarum, and urge relentless war ;  
But soon my fingers fail'd me, my face droop'd, and I  
    resign'd myself,  
To sit by the wounded and soothe them, or silently watch  
    the dead.*



### DRUM-TAPS.

#### 1

<sup>1</sup> FIRST, O songs, for a prelude,  
Lightly strike on the stretch'd tympanum, pride and joy  
    in my city,  
How she led the rest to arms—how she gave the cue,  
How at once with lithe limbs, unwaiting a moment, she  
    sprang ;  
(O superb ! O Manhattan, my own, my peerless !  
O strongest you in the hour of danger, in crisis ! O  
    truer than steel !)  
How you sprang ! how you threw off the costumes of  
    peace with indifferent hand ;  
How your soft opera-music changed, and the drum and  
    fife were heard in their stead ;  
How you led to the war, (that shall serve for our pre-  
    lude, songs of soldiers,)  
How Manhattan drum-taps led.

## 2

<sup>2</sup> Forty years had I in my city seen soldiers parading ;  
Forty years as a pageant—till unawares, the Lady of  
this teeming and turbulent city,  
Sleepless, amid her ships, her houses, her incalculable  
wealth,  
With her million children around her—suddenly,  
At dead of night, at news from the south,  
Incens'd, struck with clench'd hand the pavement.

<sup>3</sup> A shock electric—the night sustain'd it ;  
Till with ominous hum, our hive at day-break pour'd  
out its myriads.

<sup>4</sup> From the houses then, and the workshops, and  
through all the doorways,  
Leapt they tumultuous—and lo ! Manhattan arming.

## 3

<sup>5</sup> To the drum-taps prompt,  
The young men falling in and arming ;  
The mechanics arming, (the trowel, the jack-plane, the  
blacksmith's hammer, tost aside with precipita-  
tion ;)   
The lawyer leaving his office, and arming—the judge  
leaving the court ;  
The driver deserting his wagon in the street, jumping  
down, throwing the reins abruptly down on the  
horses' backs ;  
The salesman leaving the store—the boss, book-keeper,  
porter, all leaving ;  
Squads gather everywhere by common consent, and  
arm ;  
The new recruits, even boys—the old men show them  
how to wear their accoutrements—they buckle  
the straps carefully ;  
Outdoors arming—indoors arming—the flash of the  
musket-barrels ;  
The white tents cluster in camps—the arm'd sentries  
around—the sunrise cannon, and again at sunset ;

Arm'd regiments arrive every day, pass through the city, and embark from the wharves ;  
 (How good they look, as they tramp down to the river, sweaty, with their guns on their shoulders !  
 How I love them ! how I could hug them, with their brown faces, and their clothes and knapsacks cover'd with dust !)  
 The blood of the city up—arm'd ! arm'd ! the cry everywhere ;  
 The flags flung out from the steeples of churches, and from all the public buildings and stores ;  
 The tearful parting—the mother kisses her son—the son kisses his mother ;  
 (Loth is the mother to part—yet not a word does she speak to detain him ;)  
 The tumultuous escort—the ranks of policemen preceding, clearing the way ;  
 The unpent enthusiasm—the wild cheers of the crowd for their favorites ;  
 The artillery—the silent cannons, bright as gold, drawn along, rumble lightly over the stones ;  
 (Silent cannons—soon to cease your silence !  
 Soon, unlimber'd, to begin the red business ;)  
 All the mutter of preparation—all the determin'd arming ;  
 The hospital service—the lint, bandages, and medicines ;  
 The women volunteering for nurses—the work begun for, in earnest—no mere parade now ;  
 War ! an arm'd race is advancing !—the welcome for battle—no turning away ;  
 War ! be it weeks, months, or years—an arm'd race is advancing to welcome it.

4

<sup>6</sup> Mannahatta a-march !—and it's O to sing it well !  
 It's O for a manly life in the camp !

<sup>7</sup> And the sturdy artillery !  
 The guns, bright as gold—the work for giants—to serve well the guns :

Unlimber them ! no more, as the past forty years, for  
salutes for courtesies merely ;  
Put in something else now besides powder and wadding.

## 5

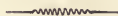
<sup>s</sup> And you, Lady of Ships ! you Mannahatta !  
Old matron of this proud, friendly, turbulent city !  
Often in peace and wealth you were pensive, or covertly  
frown'd amid all your children ;  
But now you smile with joy, exulting old Mannahatta !

## 1861.

ARM'D year ! year of the struggle !  
No dainty rhymes or sentimental love verses for you,  
terrible year !  
Not you as some pale poetling, seated at a desk, lisp-  
ing cadenzas piano ;  
But as a strong man, erect, clothed in blue clothes, ad-  
vancing, carrying a rifle on your shoulder,  
With well-gristled body and sunburnt face and hands  
—with a knife in the belt at your side,  
As I heard you shouting loud—your sonorous voice  
ringing across the continent ;  
Your masculine voice, O year, as rising amid the great  
cities,  
Amid the men of Manhattan I saw you, as one of the  
workmen, the dwellers in Manhattan ;  
Or with large steps crossing the prairies out of Illinois  
and Indiana,  
Rapidly crossing the West with springy gait, and de-  
scending the Alleghanies ;  
Or down from the great lakes, or in Pennsylvania, or on  
deck along the Ohio river ;  
Or southward along the Tennessee or Cumberland rivers,  
or at Chattanooga on the mountain top,



Saw I your gait and saw I your sinewy limbs, clothed  
in blue, bearing weapons, robust year ;  
Heard your determin'd voice, launch'd forth again and  
again ;  
Year that suddenly sang by the mouths of the round-  
lipp'd cannon,  
I repeat you, hurrying, crashing, sad, distracted year.



## BEAT! BEAT! DRUMS!

### 1

BEAT! beat! drums!—Blow! bugles! blow!  
Through the windows—through doors—burst like a  
ruthless force,  
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation ;  
Into the school where the scholar is studying ;  
Leave not the bridegroom quiet—no happiness must he  
have now with his bride ;  
Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, plowing his field or  
gathering his grain ;  
So fierce you whirr and pound, you drums—so shrill  
you bugles blow.

### 2

Beat! beat! drums!—Blow! bugles! blow!  
Over the traffic of cities—over the rumble of wheels in  
the streets :  
Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the houses ?  
No sleepers must sleep in those beds ;  
No bargainers' bargains by day—no brokers or specu-  
lators—Would they continue ?  
Would the talkers be talking ? would the singer attempt  
to sing ?  
Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case be-  
fore the judge ?  
Then rattle quicker, heavier drums—you bugles wilder  
blow.

## 3

Beat! beat! drums!—Blow! bugles! blow!  
Make no parley—stop for no expostulation;  
Mind not the timid—mind not the weeper or prayer;  
Mind not the old man beseeching the young man;  
Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties;  
Make even the trestles to shake the dead, where they  
lie awaiting the hearse,  
So strong you thump, O terrible drums—so loud you  
bugles blow.

---

FROM PAUMANOK STARTING I FLY LIKE A  
BIRD.

From Paumanok starting, I fly like a bird,  
Around and around to soar, to sing the idea of all;  
To the north betaking myself, to sing there arctic  
songs,  
To Kanada, 'till I absorb Kanada in myself—to Michigan then,  
To Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, to sing their songs,  
(they are inimitable;)  
Then to Ohio and Indiana to sing theirs—to Missouri  
and Kansas and Arkansas, to sing theirs,  
To Tennessee and Kentucky—to the Carolinas and  
Georgia, to sing theirs,  
To Texas, and so along up toward California, to roam  
accepted everywhere;  
To sing first, (to the tap of the war-drum, if need be,)  
The idea of all—of the western world, one and inseparable,  
And then the song of each member of These States.

RISE, O DAYS, FROM YOUR FATHOMLESS DEEPS.

RISE, O days, from your fathomless deeps, till you  
 loftier, fiercer sweep!  
 Long for my soul, hungering gymnastic, I devour'd  
 what the earth gave me ;  
 Long I roam'd the woods of the north—long I watch'd  
 Niagara pouring ;  
 I travel'd the prairies over, and slept on their breast—  
 I cross'd the Nevadas, I cross'd the plateaus ;  
 I ascended the towering rocks along the Pacific, I sail'd  
 out to sea ;  
 I sail'd through the storm, I was refresh'd by the storm ;  
 I watch'd with joy the threatening maws of the waves ;  
 I mark'd the white combs where they career'd so high,  
 curling over ;  
 I heard the wind piping, I saw the black clouds ;  
 Saw from below what arose and mounted, (O superb ! O  
 wild as my heart, and powerful !)  
 Heard the continuous thunder, as it bellow'd after the  
 lightning ;  
 Noted the slender and jagged threads of lightning, as  
 sudden and fast amid the din they chased each  
 other across the sky ;  
 —These, and such as these, I, elate, saw—saw with  
 wonder, yet pensive and masterful ;  
 All the menacing might of the globe uprisen around  
 me ;  
 Yet there with my soul I fed—I fed content, super-  
 cilious.

2

'Twas well, O soul ! 'twas a good preparation you gave  
 me !  
 Now we advance our latent and ampler hunger to fill ;  
 Now we go forth to receive what the earth and the sea  
 never gave us ;  
 Not through the mighty woods we go, but through the  
 mightier cities ;

Something for us is pouring now, more than Niagara  
pouring ;  
Torrents of men, (sources and rills of the Northwest,  
are you indeed inexhaustible?)  
-What, to pavements and homesteads here—what were  
those storms of the mountains and sea?  
What, to passions I witness around me to-day? Was  
the sea risen?  
Was the wind piping the pipe of death under the black  
clouds?  
Lo! from deeps more unfathomable, something more  
deadly and savage ;  
Manhattan, rising, advancing with menacing front—  
Cincinnati, Chicago, unchain'd ;  
—What was that swell I saw on the ocean? behold  
what comes here!  
How it climbs with daring feet and hands! how it  
dashes!  
How the true thunder bellows after the lightning! how  
bright the flashes of lightning!  
How DEMOCRACY, with desperate vengeful port strides  
on, shown through the dark by those flashes of  
lightning!  
(Yet a mournful wail and low sob I fancied I heard  
through the dark,  
In a lull of the deafening confusion.)

## 3

Thunder on! stride on, Democracy! strike with venge-  
ful stroke!  
And do you rise higher than ever yet, O days, O cities!  
Crash heavier, heavier yet, O storms! you have done me  
good ;  
My soul, prepared in the mountains, absorbs your im-  
mortal strong nutriment ;  
—Long had I walk'd my cities, my country roads,  
through farms, only half satisfied ;  
One doubt, nauseous, undulating like a snake, crawl'd  
on the ground before me,

Continually preceding my steps, turning upon me oft,  
 ironically hissing low ;  
 —The cities I loved so well, I abandon'd and left—I  
 sped to the certainties suitable to me ;  
 Hungering, hungering, hungering, for primal energies,  
 and Nature's dauntlessness,  
 I refresh'd myself with it only, I could relish it only ;  
 I waited the bursting forth of the pent fire—on the  
 water and air I waited long ;  
 —But now I no longer wait—I am fully satisfied—I am  
 gluttled ;  
 I have witness'd the true lightning—I have witness'd  
 my cities electric ;  
 I have lived to behold man burst forth, and warlike  
 America rise ;  
 Hence I will seek no more the food of the northern sol-  
 itary wilds,  
 No more on the mountains roam, or sail the stormy sea.



### CITY OF SHIPS.

CITY of ships!  
 (O the black ships! O the fierce ships!  
 O the beautiful, sharp-bow'd steam-ships and sail-ships!)  
 City of the world! (for all races are here ;  
 All the lands of the earth make contributions here ;)  
 City of the sea! city of hurried and glittering tides!  
 City whose gleeful tides continually rush or recede,  
 whirling in and out, with eddies and foam!  
 City of wharves and stores! city of tall façades of mar-  
 ble and iron!  
 Proud and passionate city! mettlesome, mad, extrava-  
 gant city!  
 Spring up, O city! not for peace alone, but be indeed  
 yourself, warlike!  
 Fear not! submit to no models but your own, O city!  
 Behold me! incarnate me, as I have incarnated you!



I have rejected nothing you offer'd me—whom you  
 adopted, I have adopted ;  
 Good or bad, I never question you—I love all—I do not  
 condemn anything ;  
 I chant and celebrate all that is yours—yet peace no  
 more ;  
 In peace I chanted peace, but now the drum of war is  
 mine ;  
 War, red war, is my song through your streets, O city !



## THE CENTENARIAN'S STORY.

VOLUNTEER OF 1861-2.

(At Washington Park, Brooklyn, assisting the Centenarian.)

<sup>1</sup> GIVE me your hand, old Revolutionary ;  
 The hill-top is nigh—but a few steps, (make room, gentlemen ;)   
 Up the path you have follow'd me well, spite of your  
 hundred and extra years ;  
 You can walk, old man, though your eyes are almost  
 done ;  
 Your faculties serve you, and presently I must have  
 them serve me.

<sup>2</sup> Rest, while I tell what the crowd around us means ;  
 On the plain below, recruits are drilling and exercising ;  
 There is the camp—one regiment departs to-morrow ;  
 Do you hear the officers giving the orders ?  
 Do you hear the clank of the muskets ?

<sup>3</sup> Why, what comes over you now, old man ?  
 Why do you tremble, and clutch my hand so convulsively ?  
 The troops are but drilling—they are yet surrounded  
 with smiles ;

Around them, at hand, the well-drest friends, and the  
 women ;  
 While splendid and warm the afternoon sun shines  
 down ;  
 Green the midsummer verdure, and fresh blows the  
 dallying breeze,  
 O'er proud and peaceful cities, and arm of the sea be-  
 tween.

<sup>4</sup> But drill and parade are over—they march back to  
 quarters ;  
 Only hear that approval of hands! hear what a clap-  
 ping!

<sup>5</sup> As wending, the crowds now part and disperse—but  
 we, old man,  
 Not for nothing have I brought you hither—we must  
 remain ;  
 You to speak in your turn, and I to listen and tell.

### THE CENTENARIAN.

<sup>6</sup> When I clutch'd your hand, it was not with terror ;  
 But suddenly, pouring about me here, on every side,  
 And below there where the boys were drilling, and up  
 the slopes they ran,  
 And where tents are pitch'd, and wherever you see,  
 south and south-east and south-west,  
 Over hills, across lowlands, and in the skirts of woods,  
 And along the shores, in mire (now fill'd over), came  
 again, and suddenly raged,  
 As eighty-five years a-gone, no mere parade receiv'd  
 with applause of friends,  
 But a battle, which I took part in myself—aye, long ago  
 as it is, I took part in it,  
 Walking then this hill-top, this same ground.

<sup>7</sup> Aye, this is the ground ;  
 My blind eyes, even as I speak, behold it re-peopled  
 from graves ;

The years recede, pavements and stately houses disappear ;  
Rude forts appear again, the old hoop'd guns are mounted ;  
I see the lines of rais'd earth stretching from river to bay ;  
I mark the vista of waters, I mark the uplands and slopes :  
Here we lay encamp'd—it was this time in summer also.

<sup>8</sup> As I talk, I remember all—I remember the Declaration ;  
It was read here—the whole army paraded—it was read to us here ;  
By his staff surrounded, the General stood in the middle—he held up his unsheath'd sword,  
It glitter'd in the sun in full sight of the army.

<sup>9</sup> 'Twas a bold act then ;  
The English war-ships had just arrived—the king had sent them from over the sea ;  
We could watch down the lower bay where they lay at anchor,  
And the transports, swarming with soldiers.

<sup>10</sup> A few days more, and they landed—and then the battle.

<sup>11</sup> Twenty thousand were brought against us,  
A veteran force, furnish'd with good artillery.

<sup>12</sup> I tell not now the whole of the battle ;  
But one brigade, early in the forenoon, order'd forward to engage the red-coats ;  
Of that brigade I tell, and how steadily it march'd,  
And how long and how well it stood, confronting death.

<sup>13</sup> Who do you think that was, marching steadily, sternly confronting death ?  
It was the brigade of the youngest men, two thousand strong,

Rais'd in Virginia and Maryland, and many of them known personally to the General.

<sup>14</sup> Jauntily forward they went with quick step toward  
Gowanus' waters ;  
Till of a sudden, unlook'd for, by defiles through the  
woods, gain'd at night,  
The British advancing, wedging in from the east,  
fiercely playing their guns,  
That brigade of the youngest was cut off, and at the  
enemy's mercy.

<sup>15</sup> The General watch'd them from this hill ;  
They made repeated desperate attempts to burst their  
environment ;  
Then drew close together, very compact, their flag  
flying in the middle ;  
But O from the hills how the cannon were thinning and  
thinning them !

<sup>16</sup> It sickens me yet, that slaughter !  
I saw the moisture gather in drops on the face of the  
General ;  
I saw how he wrung his hands in anguish.

<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile the British maneuver'd to draw us out  
for a pitch'd battle ;  
But we dared not trust the chances of a pitch'd battle.

<sup>18</sup> We fought the fight in detachments ;  
Sallying forth, we fought at several points—but in each  
the luck was against us ;  
Our foe advancing, steadily getting the best of it, push'd  
us back to the works on this hill ;  
Till we turn'd, menacing, here, and then he left us.

<sup>19</sup> That was the going out of the brigade of the young-  
est men, two thousand strong ;  
Few return'd—nearly all remain in Brooklyn.

<sup>20</sup> That, and here, my General's first battle ;

No women looking on, nor sunshine to bask in—it did  
not conclude with applause ;  
Nobody clapp'd hands here then.

<sup>21</sup> But in darkness, in mist, on the ground, under a chill  
rain,  
Wearied that night we lay, foil'd and sullen ;  
While scornfully laugh'd many an arrogant lord, off  
against us encamp'd,  
Quite within hearing, feasting, klinking wine-glasses  
together over their victory.

<sup>22</sup> So, dull and damp, and another day ;  
But the night of that, mist lifting, rain ceasing,  
Silent as a ghost, while they thought they were sure of  
him, my General retreated.

<sup>23</sup> I saw him at the river-side,  
Down by the ferry, lit by torches, hastening the embar-  
cation ;  
My General waited till the soldiers and wounded were  
all pass'd over ;  
And then, (it was just ere sunrise,) these eyes rested on  
him for the last time.

<sup>24</sup> Every one else seem'd fill'd with gloom ;  
Many no doubt thought of capitulation.

<sup>25</sup> But when my General pass'd me,  
As he stood in his boat, and look'd toward the coming  
sun,  
I saw something different from capitulation.

#### TERMINUS.

<sup>26</sup> Enough—the Centenarian's story ends ;  
The two, the past and present, have interchanged ;  
I myself, as connector, as chansonnier of a great future,  
am now speaking.



<sup>27</sup> And is this the ground Washington trod ?  
And these waters I listlessly daily cross, are these the  
waters he cross'd,  
As resolute in defeat, as other generals in their proudest  
triumphs ?

<sup>28</sup> It is well—a lesson like that, always comes good ;  
I must copy the story, and send it eastward and west-  
ward ;  
I must preserve that look, as it beam'd on you, rivers  
of Brooklyn.

<sup>29</sup> See ! as the annual round returns, the phantoms  
return ;  
It is the 27th of August, and the British have landed ;  
The battle begins, and goes against us—behold ! through  
the smoke, Washington's face ;  
The brigade of Virginia and Maryland have march'd  
forth to intercept the enemy ;  
They are cut off—murderous artillery from the hills  
plays upon them ;  
Rank after rank falls, while over them silently droops  
the flag,  
Baptized that day in many a young man's bloody  
wounds,  
In death, defeat, and sisters', mothers' tears.

<sup>30</sup> Ah, hills and slopes of Brooklyn ! I perceive you are  
more valuable than your owners supposed ;  
Ah, river ! henceforth you will be illumin'd to me at  
sunrise with something besides the sun.

<sup>31</sup> Encampments new ! in the midst of you stands an  
encampment very old ;  
Stands forever the camp of the dead brigade.

## An Army Corps on the March.

WITH its cloud of skirmishers in advance,  
With now the sound of a single shot, snapping like a  
    whip, and now an irregular volley,  
The swarming ranks press on and on, the dense brigades  
    press on ;  
Glittering dimly, toiling under the sun—the dust-cover'd  
    men,  
In columns rise and fall to the undulations of the  
    ground,  
With artillery interspers'd—the wheels rumble, the  
    horses sweat,  
As the army corps advances.

---

## Cavalry Crossing a Ford.

A LINE in long array, where they wind betwixt green  
    islands ;  
They take a serpentine course—their arms flash in the  
    sun—Hark to the musical clank ;  
Behold the silvery river—in it the splashing horses,  
    loitering, stop to drink ;  
Behold the brown-faced men—each group, each person,  
    a picture—the negligent rest on the saddles ;  
Some emerge on the opposite bank—others are just  
    entering the ford—while,  
Scarlet, and blue, and snowy white,  
The guidon flags flutter gaily in the wind.

## Bivouac on a Mountain Side.

I see before me now, a traveling army halting ;  
Below, a fertile valley spread, with barns, and the  
orchards of summer ;  
Behind, the terraced sides of a mountain, abrupt in  
places, rising high ;  
Broken, with rocks, with clinging cedars, with tall  
shapes, dingly seen ;  
The numerous camp-fires scatter'd near and far, some  
away up on the mountain ;  
The shadowy forms of men and horses, looming, large-  
sized, flickering ;  
And over all, the sky—the sky! far, far out of reach,  
studded, breaking out, the eternal stars.

---

## By the Bivouac's Fitful Flame.

By the bivouac's fitful flame,  
A procession winding around me, solemn and sweet and  
slow ;—but first I note,  
The tents of the sleeping army, the fields' and woods'  
dim outline,  
The darkness, lit by spots of kindled fire—the silence ;  
Like a phantom far or near an occasional figure moving ;  
The shrubs and trees, (as I left my eyes they seem to  
be stealthily watching me ;)  
While wind in procession thoughts, O tender and  
wondrous thoughts,  
Of life and death—of home and the past and loved,  
and of those that are far away ;  
A solemn and slow procession there as I sit on the  
ground,  
By the bivouac's fitful flame.

## Come Up from the Fields, Father.

### 1

<sup>1</sup> COME up from the fields, father, here's a letter from  
our Pete ;  
And come to the front door, mother—here's a letter  
from thy dear son.

### 2

<sup>2</sup> Lo, 'tis autumn ;  
Lo, where the trees, deeper green, yellower and redder,  
Cool and sweeten Ohio's villages, with leaves fluttering  
in the moderate wind ;  
Where apples ripe in the orchards hang, and grapes on  
the trellis'd vines ;  
(Smell you the smell of the grapes on the vines ?  
Smell you the buckwheat, where the bees were lately  
buzzing?)

<sup>3</sup> Above all, lo, the sky, so calm, so transparent after  
the rain, and with wondrous clouds ;  
Below, too, all calm, all vital and beautiful—and the  
farm prospers well.

### 3

<sup>4</sup> Down in the fields all prospers well ;  
But now from the fields come, father—come at the  
daughter's call ;  
And come to the entry, mother—to the front door come,  
right away.

<sup>5</sup> Fast as she can she hurries—something ominous—  
her steps trembling ;  
She does not tarry to smooth her hair, nor adjust her  
cap.

<sup>6</sup> Open the envelope quickly ;

O this is not our son's writing, yet his name is sign'd ;  
O a strange hand writes for our dear son—O stricken  
mother's soul !

All swims before her eyes—flashes with black—she  
catches the main words only ;

Sentences broken—*gun-shot wound in the breast, cavalry  
skirmish, taken to hospital,*

*At present low, but will soon be better.*

4

<sup>7</sup> Ah, now the single figure to me,  
Amid all teeming and wealthy Ohio, with all its cities  
and farms,

Sickly white in the face, and dull in the head, very faint,  
By the jamb of a door leans.

<sup>8</sup> *Grieve not so, dear mother, (the just-grown daughter  
speaks through her sobs ;*

*The little sisters huddle around, speechless and dis-  
may'd ;)*

*See, dearest mother, the letter says Pete will soon be better.*

5

<sup>9</sup> Alas, poor boy, he will never be better, (nor may-be  
needs to be better, that brave and simple soul ;)

While they stand at home at the door, he is dead  
already ;

The only son is dead.

<sup>10</sup> But the mother needs to be better ;

She, with thin form, presently drest in black ;

By day her meals untouch'd—then at night fitfully  
sleeping, often waking,

In the midnight waking, weeping, longing with one deep  
longing,

O that she might withdraw unnoticed—silent from life,  
escape and withdraw,

To follow, to seek, to be with her dear dead son.



VIGIL STRANGE I KEPT ON THE FIELD ONE  
NIGHT.

VIGIL strange I kept on the field one night :  
When you, my son and my comrade, dropt at my side  
that day,  
One look I but gave, which your dear eyes return'd,  
with a look I shall never forget ;  
One touch of your hand to mine, O boy, reach'd up as  
you lay on the ground ;  
Then onward I sped in the battle, the even-contested  
battle ;  
Till late in the night reliev'd, to the place at last again I  
made my way ;  
Found you in death so cold, dear comrade—found your  
body, son of responding kisses, (never again on  
earth responding ;)  
Bared your face in the starlight—curious the scene—  
cool blew the moderate night-wind ;  
Long there and then in vigil I stood, dimly around me  
the battle-field spreading ;  
Vigil wondrous and vigil sweet, there in the fragrant  
silent night ;  
But not a tear fell, not even a long-drawn sigh—Long,  
long I gazed ;  
Then on the earth partially reclining, sat by your side,  
leaning my chin in my hands ;  
Passing sweet hours, immortal and mystic hours with  
you, dearest comrade—Not a tear, not a word ;  
Vigil of silence, love and death—vigil for you, my son  
and my soldier,  
As onward silently stars aloft, eastward new ones up-  
ward stole ;  
Vigil final for you, brave boy, (I could not save you,  
swift was your death,  
I faithfully loved you and cared for you living—I think  
we shall surely meet again ;)  
Till at latest lingering of the night, indeed just as the  
dawn appear'd,  
My comrade I wrapt in his blanket, envelop'd well his  
form,

Folded the blanket well, tucking it carefully over head,  
 and carefully under feet ;  
 And there and then, and bathed by the rising sun, my  
 son in his grave, in his rude-dug grave I de-  
 posited ;  
 Ending my vigil strange with that—vigil of night and  
 battle-field dim ;  
 Vigil for boy of responding kisses, (never again on earth  
 responding ;)   
 Vigil for comrade swiftly slain—vigil I never forget,  
 how as day brighten'd,  
 I rose from the chill ground, and folded my soldier well  
 in his blanket,  
 And buried him where he fell.

---

### A MARCH IN THE RANKS HARD-PREST, AND THE ROAD UNKNOWN.

A MARCH in the ranks hard-prest, and the road unknown ;  
 A route through a heavy wood, with muffled steps in  
 the darkness ;  
 Our army foil'd with loss severe, and the sullen remnant  
 retreating ;  
 Till after midnight glimmer upon us, the lights of a  
 dim-lighted building ;  
 We come to an open space in the woods, and halt by  
 the dim-lighted building ;  
 'Tis a large old church at the crossing roads—'tis now  
 an impromptu hospital ;  
 —Entering but for a minute, I see a sight beyond all  
 the pictures and poems ever made :  
 Shadows of deepest, deepest black, just lit by moving  
 candles and lamps,  
 And by one great pitchy torch, stationary, with wild red  
 flame, and clouds of smoke ;  
 By these, crowds, groups of forms, vaguely I see, on the  
 floor, some in the pews laid down ;

At my feet more distinctly, a soldier, a mere lad, in  
danger of bleeding to death, (he is shot in the  
abdomen ;)  
I staunch the blood temporarily, (the youngster's face  
is white as a lily ;)  
Then before I depart I sweep my eyes o'er the scene,  
fain to absorb it all ;  
Faces, varieties, postures beyond description, most in  
obscurity, some of them dead ;  
Surgeons operating, attendants holding lights, the smell  
of ether, the odor of blood ;  
The crowd, O the crowd of the bloody forms of soldiers  
—the yard outside also fill'd ;  
Some on the bare ground, some on planks or stretchers,  
some in the death-spasm sweating ;  
An occasional scream or cry, the doctor's shouted orders  
or calls ;  
The glisten of the little steel instruments catching the  
glint of the torches ;  
These I resume as I chant—I see again the forms, I  
smell the odor ;  
Then hear outside the orders given, *Fall in, my men,*  
*Fall in ;*  
But first I bend to the dying lad—his eyes open—a  
half-smile gives he me ;  
Then the eyes close, calmly close, and I speed forth to  
the darkness,  
Resuming, marching, ever in darkness marching, on in  
the ranks,  
The unknown road still marching.



### A SIGHT IN CAMP IN THE DAY-BREAK GREY AND DIM.

<sup>1</sup> A SIGHT in camp in the day-break grey and dim,  
As from my tent I emerge so early, sleepless,  
As slow I walk in the cool fresh air, the path near by  
the hospital tent,

Three forms I see on stretchers lying, brought out  
there, untended lying,  
Over each the blanket spread, ample brownish woollen  
blanket,  
Grey and heavy blanket, folding, covering all.

<sup>2</sup> Curious, I halt, and silent stand ;  
Then with light fingers I from the face of the nearest,  
the first, just lift the blanket :  
Who are you, elderly man so gaunt and grim, with well-  
grey'd hair, and flesh all sunken about the eyes?  
Who are you, my dear comrade?

<sup>3</sup> Then to the second I step—And who are you, my  
child and darling?  
Who are you, sweet boy, with cheeks yet blooming?

<sup>4</sup> Then to the third—a face nor child, nor old, very  
calm, as of beautiful yellow-white ivory ;  
Young man, I think I know you—I think this face of  
yours is the face of the Christ himself ;  
Dead and divine, and brother of all, and here again he  
lies.



## NOT THE PILOT.

Not the pilot has charged himself to bring his ship  
into port, though beaten back, and many times  
baffled ;  
Not the path-finder, penetrating inland, weary and  
long,  
By deserts parch'd, snows-chill'd, rivers wet, perseveres  
till he reaches his destination,  
More than I have charged myself, heeded or unheeded,  
to compose a free march for These States,  
To be exhilarating music to them—a battle-call, rousing  
to arms, if need be—years, centuries hence.

## AS TOILSOME I WANDER'D VIRGINIA'S WOODS.

<sup>1</sup> AS TOILSOME I wander'd Virginia's woods,  
 To the music of rustling leaves, kick'd by my feet, (for  
     'twas autumn,)
 I mark'd at the foot of a tree the grave of a soldier,  
 Mortally wounded he, and buried on the retreat, (easily  
     all could I understand ;)
 The halt of a mid-day hour, when up! no time to lose  
     —yet this sign left,  
 On a tablet scrawl'd and nail'd on the tree by the grave,  
*Bold, cautious, true, and my loving comrade.*

<sup>2</sup> Long, long I muse, then on my way go wandering ;  
 Many a changeful season to follow, and many a scene  
     of life ;  
 Yet at times through changeful season and scene, abrupt, alone, or in the crowded street,  
 Comes before me the unknown soldier's grave—comes  
     the inscription rude in Virginia's woods,  
*Bold, cautious, true, and my loving comrade.*



## YEAR THAT TREMBLED AND REEL'D BENEATH ME.

YEAR that trembled and reel'd beneath me !  
 Your summer wind was warm enough—yet the air I  
     breathed froze me ;  
 A thick gloom fell through the sunshine and darken'd  
     me ;  
 Must I change my triumphant songs? said I to myself ;  
 Must I indeed learn to chant the cold dirges of the baffled ?  
 And sullen hymns of defeat ?



# THE DRESSER.

## 1

<sup>1</sup> AN old man bending, I come, among new faces,  
 Years looking backward, resuming, in answer to children,  
*Come tell us, old man,* as from young men and maidens  
 that love me ;  
 Years hence of these scenes, of these furious passions,  
 these chances,  
 Of unsurpass'd heroes, (was one side so brave? the  
 other was equally brave ;)   
 Now be witness again—paint the mightiest armies of  
 earth ;  
 Of those armies so rapid, so wondrous, what saw you to  
 tell us ?  
 What stays with you latest and deepest ? of curious  
 panics,  
 Of hard-fought engagements, or sieges tremendous,  
 what deepest remains ?

## 2

<sup>2</sup> O maidens and young men I love, and that love me,  
 What you ask of my days, those the strangest and  
 sudden your talking recalls ;  
 Soldier alert I arrive, after a long march, cover'd with  
 sweat and dust ;  
 In the nick of time I come, plunge in the fight, loudly  
 shout in the rush of successful charge ;  
 Enter the captur'd works . . . . yet lo ! like a swift-  
 running river, they fade ;  
 Pass and are gone, they fade—I dwell not on soldiers'  
 perils or soldiers' joys ;  
 (Both I remember well—many the hardships, few the  
 joys, yet I was content.)

<sup>3</sup> But in silence, in dreams' projections,  
 While the world of gain and appearance and mirth goes  
 on,

So soon what is over forgotten, and waves wash the  
 imprints off the sand,  
 In nature's reverie sad, with hinged knees returning, I  
 enter the doors—(while for you up there,  
 Whoever you are, follow me without noise, and be of  
 strong heart.)

## 3

<sup>4</sup> Bearing the bandages, water and sponge,  
 Straight and swift to my wounded I go,  
 Where they lie on the ground, after the battle brought  
 in ;  
 Where their priceless blood reddens the grass, the  
 ground ;  
 Or to the rows of the hospital tent, or under the roof'd  
 hospital ;  
 To the long rows of cots, up and down, each side, I  
 return ;  
 To each and all, one after another, I draw near—not  
 one do I miss ;  
 An attendant follows, holding a tray—he carries a refuse  
 pail,  
 Soon to be fill'd with clotted rags and blood, emptied,  
 and fill'd again.

<sup>5</sup> I onward go, I stop,  
 With hinged knees and steady hand, to dress wounds ;  
 I am firm with each—the pangs are sharp, yet unavoi-  
 dable ;  
 One turns to me his appealing eyes—(poor boy ! I  
 never knew you,  
 Yet I think I could not refuse this moment to die for  
 you, if that would save you.)

## 4

<sup>6</sup> On, on I go—(open, doors of time ! open, hospital  
 doors !)  
 The crush'd head I dress, (poor crazed hand, tear not  
 the bandage away ;)  
 The neck of the cavalry-man, with the bullet through  
 and through, I examine ;

Hard the breathing rattles, quite glazed already the  
eye, yet life struggles hard ;  
(Come, sweet death ! be persuaded, O beautiful death !  
In mercy come quickly.)

<sup>7</sup> From the stump of the arm, the amputated hand,  
I undo the clotted lint, remove the slough, wash off the  
matter and blood ;  
Back on his pillow the soldier bends, with curv'd neck,  
and side-falling head ;  
His eyes are closed, his face is pale, (he dares not look  
on the bloody stump,  
And has not yet look'd on it.)

<sup>8</sup> I dress a wound in the side, deep, deep ;  
But a day or two more—for see, the frame all wasted  
already, and sinking,  
And the yellow-blue countenance see.

<sup>9</sup> I dress the perforated shoulder, the foot with the bul-  
let wound,  
Cleanse the one with a gnawing and putrid gangrene,  
so sickening, so offensive,  
While the attendant stands behind aside me, holding  
the tray and pail.

<sup>10</sup> I am faithful, I do not give out ;  
The fractur'd thigh, the knee, the wound in the abdo-  
men,  
These and more I dress with impassive hand—(yet deep  
in my breast a fire, a burning flame.)

5

<sup>11</sup> Thus in silence, in dreams' projections,  
Returning, resuming, I thread my way through the  
hospitals ;  
The hurt and wounded I pacify with soothing hand,  
I sit by the restless all the dark night—some are so  
young ;  
Some suffer so much—I recall the experience sweet and  
sad ;  
(Many a soldier's loving arms about this neck have  
cross'd and rested,  
Many a soldier's kiss dwells on these bearded lips.)

## LONG, TOO LONG, O LAND.

LONG, too long, O land,  
Traveling roads all even and peaceful, you learn'd from  
joys and prosperity only ;  
But now, ah now, to learn from crises of anguish—ad-  
vancing, grappling with direst fate, and recoiling  
not ;  
And now to conceive, and show to the world, what your  
children en-masse really are ;  
(For who except myself has yet conceiv'd what your  
children en-masse really are?)

---

## GIVE ME THE SPLENDID SILENT SUN.

## 1

GIVE me the splendid silent sun, with all his beams full-  
dazzling ;  
Give me juicy autumnal fruit, ripe and red from the  
orchard ;  
Give me a field where the unmow'd grass grows ;  
Give me an arbor, give me the trellis'd grape ;  
Give me fresh corn and wheat—give me serene-moving  
animals, teaching content ;  
Give me nights perfectly quiet, as on high plateaus  
west of the Mississippi, and I looking up at the  
stars ;  
Give me odorous at sunrise a garden of beautiful flow-  
ers, where I can walk undisturb'd ;  
Give me for marriage a sweet-breath'd woman, of whom  
I should never tire ;  
Give me a perfect child—give me, away, aside from the  
noise of the world, a rural domestic life ;  
Give me to warble spontaneous songs, reliev'd, recluse  
by myself, for my own ears only ;

Give me solitude—give me Nature—give me again; O  
 Nature, your primal sanities!  
 —These, demanding to have them, (tired with cease-  
 less excitement, and rack'd by the war-strife ;)  
 These to procure, incessantly asking, rising in cries  
 from my heart,  
 While yet incessantly asking, still I adhere to my city ;  
 Day upon day, and year upon year, O city, walking your  
 streets,  
 Where you hold me enchain'd a certain time, refusing  
 to give me up ;  
 Yet giving to make me glutted, enrich'd of soul—you  
 give me forever faces ;  
 (O I see what I sought to escape, confronting, reversing  
 my cries ;  
 I see my own soul trampling down what it ask'd for.)

2

Keep your splendid, silent sun ;  
 Keep your woods, O Nature, and the quiet places by  
 the woods ;  
 Keep your fields of clover and timothy, and your corn-  
 fields and orchards ;  
 Keep the blossoming buckwheat fields, where the Ninth-  
 month bees hum ;  
 Give me faces and streets ! give me these phantoms in-  
 cessant and endless along the trottoirs !  
 Give me interminable eyes ! give me women ! give me  
 comrades and lovers by the thousand !  
 Let me see new ones every day ! let me hold new ones  
 by the hand every day !  
 Give me such shows ! give me the streets of Manhat-  
 tan !  
 Give me Broadway, with the soldiers marching—give  
 me the sound of the trumpets and drums !  
 (The soldiers in companies or regiments—some, start-  
 ing away, flush'd and reckless ;  
 Some, their time up, returning, with thinn'd ranks—  
 young, yet very old, worn, marching, noticing  
 nothing ;)



—Give me the shores and the wharves heavy-fringed  
 with the black ships!  
 O such for me! O an intense life! O full to repletion,  
 and varied!  
 The life of the theatre, bar-room, huge hotel, for me!  
 The saloon of the steamer! the crowded excursion for  
 me! the torch-light procession!  
 The dense brigade, bound for the war, with high piled  
 military wagons following;  
 People, endless, streaming, with strong voices, passions,  
 pageants;  
 Manhattan streets, with their powerful throbs, with the  
 beating drums, as now;  
 The endless and noisy chorus, the rustle and clank of  
 muskets, (even the sight of the wounded;)  
 Manhattan crowds, with their turbulent musical chorus  
 —with varied chorus, and light of the sparkling  
 eyes;  
 Manhattan faces and eyes forever for me.



### DIRGE FOR TWO VETERANS.

#### 1

THE last sunbeam  
 Lightly falls from the finish'd Sabbath,  
 On the pavement here—and there beyond, it is looking,  
 Down a new-made double grave.

#### 2

Lo! the moon ascending!  
 Up from the east, the silvery round moon;  
 Beautiful over the house-tops, ghastly, phantom moon;  
 Immense and silent moon.

#### 3

I see a sad procession,  
 And I hear the sound of coming full-key'd bugles;

All the channels of the city streets they're flooding,  
As with voices and with tears.

4

I hear the great drums pounding,  
And the small drums steady whirring ;  
And every blow of the great convulsive drums,  
Strikes me through and through.

5

For the son is brought with the father ;  
In the foremost ranks of the fierce assault they fell ;  
Two veterans, son and father, dropt together,  
And the double grave awaits them.

6

Now nearer blow the bugles,  
And the drums strike more convulsive ;  
And the day-light o'er the pavement quite has faded,  
And the strong dead-march enwraps me.

7

In the eastern sky up-buoying,  
The sorrowful vast phantom moves illumin'd ;  
( 'Tis some mother's large, transparent face,  
In heaven brighter growing.)

8

O strong dead-march, you please me !  
O moon immense, with your silvery face you soothe me !  
O my soldiers twain ! O my veterans, passing to burial !  
What I have I also give you.

9

The moon gives you light,  
And the bugles and the drums give you music ;  
And my heart, O my soldiers, my veterans,  
My heart gives you love.

## OVER THE CARNAGE ROSE PROPHETIC A VOICE.

<sup>1</sup> OVER the carnage rose prophetic a voice,  
Be not dishearten'd—Affection shall solve the problems  
of Freedom yet ;

Those who love each other shall become invincible—  
they shall yet make Columbia victorious.

<sup>2</sup> Sons of the Mother of All! you shall yet be victorious!

You shall yet laugh to scorn the attacks of all the remainder of the earth.

<sup>3</sup> No danger shall balk Columbia's lovers ;  
If need be, a thousand shall sternly immolate themselves for one.

<sup>4</sup> One from Massachusetts shall be a Missourian's comrade ;

From Maine and from hot Carolina, and another, an Oregonese, shall be friends triune,

More precious to each other than all the riches of the earth.

<sup>5</sup> To Michigan, Florida perfumes shall tenderly come ;  
Not the perfumes of flowers, but sweeter, and wafted beyond death.

<sup>6</sup> It shall be customary in the houses and streets to see manly affection ;

The most dauntless and rude shall touch face to face lightly ;

The dependence of Liberty shall be lovers,  
The continuance of Equality shall be comrades.

<sup>7</sup> These shall tie you and band you stronger than hoops of iron ;

I, extatic, O partners! O lands! with the love of lovers tie you.

<sup>8</sup> (Were you looking to be held together by the lawyers?  
Or by an agreement on a paper? or by arms?  
—Nay—nor the world, nor any living thing, will so  
cohere.)

---

### THE ARTILLERYMAN'S VISION.

WHILE my wife at my side lies slumbering, and the wars  
are over long,  
And my head on the pillow rests at home, and the va-  
cant midnight passes,  
And through the stillness, through the dark, I hear,  
just hear, the breath of my infant,  
There in the room, as I wake from sleep, this vision  
presses upon me :  
The engagement opens there and then, in fantasy unreal;  
The skirmishers begin—they crawl cautiously ahead—  
I hear the irregular snap! snap!  
I hear the sounds of the different missiles—the short  
*t-h-t! t-h-t!* of the rifle balls ;  
I see the shells exploding, leaving small white clouds—  
I hear the great shells shrieking as they pass ;  
The grape, like the hum and whirr of wind through the  
trees, (quick, tumultuous, now the contest rages!)  
All the scenes at the batteries themselves rise in detail  
before me again ;  
The crashing and smoking—the pride of the men in  
their pieces ;  
The chief gunner ranges and sights his piece, and se-  
lects a fuse of the right time ;  
After firing, I see him lean aside, and look eagerly off  
to note the effect ;  
—Elsewhere I hear the cry of a regiment charging—  
(the young colonel leads himself this time, with  
brandish'd sword ;)   
I see the gaps cut by the enemy's volleys, (quickly  
fill'd up, no delay ;)

I breathe the suffocating smoke—then the flat clouds  
    hover low, concealing all ;  
Now a strange lull comes for a few seconds, not a shot  
    fired on either side ;  
Then resumed, the chaos louder than ever, with eager  
    calls, and orders of officers ;  
While from some distant part of the field the wind wafts  
    to my ears a shout of applause, (some special  
    success ;)   
And ever the sound of the cannon, far or near, (rousing,  
    even in dreams, a devilish exultation, and all the  
    old mad joy, in the depths of my soul ;)   
And ever the hastening of infantry shifting positions—  
    batteries, cavalry, moving hither and thither ;  
(The falling, dying, I heed not—the wounded, dripping  
    and red, I heed not—some to the rear are hob-  
    bling ;)   
Grime, heat, rush—aid-de-camps galloping by, or on a  
    full run ;  
With the patter of small arms, the warning *s-s-t* of the  
    rifles, (these in my vision I hear or see,)   
And bombs bursting in air, and at night the vari-  
    color'd rockets.

---

## I SAW OLD GENERAL AT BAY.

I saw old General at bay ;  
(Old as he was, his grey eyes yet shone out in battle  
    like stars ;)   
His small force was now completely hemm'd in, in his  
    works ;  
He call'd for volunteers to run the enemy's lines—a  
    desperate emergency ;  
I saw a hundred and more step forth from the ranks—  
    but two or three were selected ;  
I saw them receive their orders aside—they listen'd  
    with care—the adjutant was very grave ;  
I saw them depart with cheerfulness, freely risking their  
    lives.



## O TAN-FACED PRAIRIE-BOY.

O TAN-FACED prairie-boy !  
Before you came to camp, came many a welcome gift ;  
Praises and presents came, and nourishing food—till at  
last, among the recruits,  
You came, taciturn, with nothing to give—we but look'd  
on each other,  
When lo ! more than all the gifts of the world, you  
gave me.



## LOOK DOWN FAIR MOON.

Look down, fair moon, and bathe this scene ;  
Pour softly down night's nimbus floods, on faces ghast-  
ly, swollen, purple ;  
On the dead, on their backs, with their arms toss'd  
wide,  
Pour down your unstinted nimbus, sacred moon.



## RECONCILIATION.

WORD over all, beautiful as the sky !  
Beautiful that war, and all its deeds of carnage, must  
in time be utterly lost ;  
That the hands of the sisters Death and Night, inces-  
santly softly wash again, and ever again, this  
soil'd world :  
... For my enemy is dead—a man divine as myself is  
dead ;  
I look where he lies, white-faced and still, in the coffin  
—I draw near ;  
I bend down, and touch lightly with my lips the white  
face in the coffin.

## SPIRIT WHOSE WORK IS DONE.

*(Washington City, 1865.)*

SPIRIT whose work is done ! spirit of dreadful hours !  
Ere, departing, fade from my eyes your forests of bayo-  
nets ;  
Spirit of gloomiest fears and doubts, (yet onward ever  
unfaltering pressing ;)  
Spirit of many a solemn day, and many a savage scene !  
Electric spirit !  
That with muttering voice, through the war now closed,  
like a tireless phantom flitted,  
Rousing the land with breath of flame, while you beat  
and beat the drum ;  
—Now, as the sound of the drum, hollow and harsh to  
the last, reverberates round me ;  
As your ranks, your immortal ranks, return, return  
from the battles ;  
While the muskets of the young men yet lean over their  
shoulders ;  
While I look on the bayonets bristling over their shoul-  
ders ;  
While those slanted bayonets, whole forests of them,  
appearing in the distance, approach and pass  
on, returning homeward,  
Moving with steady motion, swaying to and fro, to the  
right and left,  
Evenly, lightly rising and falling, as the steps keep  
time :  
—Spirit of hours I knew, all hectic red one day, but  
pale as death next day ;  
Touch my mouth, ere you depart—press my lips close !  
Leave me your pulses of rage ! bequeath them to me !  
fill me with currents convulsive !  
Let them scorch and blister out of my chants, when you  
are gone ;  
Let them identify you to the future, in these songs.

## HOW SOLEMN, AS ONE BY ONE.

(*Washington City, 1865.*)

How solemn, as one by one,  
 As the ranks returning, all worn and sweaty—as the  
     men file by where I stand ;  
 As the faces, the masks appear—as I glance at the faces,  
     studying the masks ;  
 (As I glance upward out of this page, studying you,  
     dear friend, whoever you are ;)  
 How solemn the thought of my whispering soul, to each  
     in the ranks, and to you ;  
 I see behind each mask, that wonder, a kindred soul ;  
 O the bullet could never kill what you really are, dear  
     friend,  
 Nor the bayonet stab what you really are :  
 ... The soul ! yourself I see, great as any, good as the  
     best,  
 Waiting, secure and content, which the bullet could  
     never kill,  
 Nor the bayonet stab, O friend !



## Not Youth Pertains to Me.

Not youth pertains to me,  
 Nor delicatessen—I cannot beguile the time with talk ;  
 Awkward in the parlor, neither a dancer nor elegant ;  
 In the learn'd coterie sitting constrain'd and still—for  
     learning inures not to me ;  
 Beauty, knowledge, inure not to me—yet there are two  
     or three things inure to me ;  
 I have nourish'd the wounded, and sooth'd many a  
     dying soldier,  
 And at intervals, waiting, or in the midst of camp,  
 Composed these songs.

## TO THE LEAVEN'D SOIL THEY TROD.

To the leaven'd soil they trod, calling, I sing, for the  
last ;  
(Not cities, nor man alone, nor war, nor the dead,  
But forth from my tent emerging for good—loosing,  
untying the tent-ropes ;)  
In the freshness, the forenoon air, in the far-stretching  
circuits and vistas, again to peace restored,  
To the fiery fields emanative, and the endless vistas  
beyond—to the south and the north ;  
To the leaven'd soil of the general western world, to  
attest my songs,  
(To the average earth, the wordless earth, witness of  
war and peace,)  
To the Alleghanian hills, and the tireless Mississippi,  
To the rocks I, calling, sing, and all the trees in the  
woods,  
To the plain of the poems of heroes, to the prairie  
spreading wide,  
To the far-off sea, and the unseen winds, and the sane  
impalpable air ;  
... And responding, they answer all, (but not in words,)  
The average earth, the witness of war and peace,  
acknowledges mutely ;  
The prairie draws me close, as the father, to bosom  
broad, the son ;  
The Northern ice and rain, that began me, nourish me  
to the end ;  
But the hot sun of the South is to ripen my songs.

# LEAVES OF GRASS.

## FACES.

### 1

<sup>1</sup> SAUNTERING the pavement, or riding the country by-  
road—lo! such faces!  
Faces of friendship, precision, caution, suavity, ideal-  
ity;  
The spiritual, prescient face—the always welcome, com-  
mon, benevolent face,  
The face of the singing of music—the grand faces of  
natural lawyers and judges, broad at the back-  
top;  
The faces of hunters and fishers, bulged at the brows  
—the shaved blanch'd faces of orthodox citi-  
zens;  
The pure, extravagant, yearning, questioning artist's  
face;  
The ugly face of some beautiful Soul, the handsome de-  
tested or despised face;  
The sacred faces of infants, the illuminated face of the  
mother of many children;  
The face of an amour, the face of veneration;  
The face as of a dream, the face of an immobile rock;  
The face withdrawn of its good and bad, a castrated  
face;  
A wild hawk, his wings clipp'd by the clipper;  
A stallion that yielded at last to the thongs and knife  
of the gelder.



<sup>2</sup> Sauntering the pavement, thus, or crossing the cease-  
less ferry, faces, and faces, and faces :  
I see them, and complain not, and am content with all.

## 2

<sup>3</sup> Do you suppose I could be content with all, if I  
thought them their own finale ?

<sup>4</sup> This now is too lamentable a face for a man ;  
Some abject louse, asking leave to be—cringing for it ;  
Some milk-nosed maggot, blessing what lets it wrig to  
its hole.

<sup>5</sup> This face is a dog's snout, sniffing for garbage ;  
Snakes nest in that mouth—I hear the sibilant threat.

<sup>6</sup> This face is a haze more chill than the arctic sea ;  
Its sleepy and wobbling icebergs crunch as they go.

<sup>7</sup> This is a face of bitter herbs—this an emetic—they  
need no label ;  
And more of the drug-shelf, laudanum, caoutchouc, or  
hog's-lard.

<sup>8</sup> This face is an epilepsy, its wordless tongue gives out  
the unearthly cry,  
Its veins down the neck distend, its eyes roll till they  
show nothing but their whites,  
Its teeth grit, the palms of the hands are cut by the  
turn'd-in nails,  
The man falls struggling and foaming to the ground  
while he speculates well.

<sup>9</sup> This face is bitten by vermin and worms,  
And this is some murderer's knife, with a half-pull'd  
scabbard.

<sup>10</sup> This face owes to the sexton his dismalest fee ;  
An unceasing death-bell tolls there.

## 3

<sup>11</sup> Those then are really men—the bosses and tufts of  
the great round globe!

<sup>12</sup> Features of my equals, would you trick me with your  
creas'd and cadaverous march?

Well, you cannot trick me.

<sup>13</sup> I see your rounded, never-erased flow ;  
I see neath the rims of your haggard and mean dis-  
guises.

<sup>14</sup> Splay and twist as you like—poke with the tangling  
fores of fishes or rats ;  
You'll be unmuzzled, you certainly will.

<sup>15</sup> I saw the face of the most smear'd and slobbering  
idiot they had at the asylum ;  
And I knew for my consolation what they knew not ;  
I knew of the agents that emptied and broke my  
brother,  
The same wait to clear the rubbish from the fallen ten-  
ement ;  
And I shall look again in a score or two of ages,  
And I shall meet the real landlord, perfect and un-  
harm'd, every inch as good as myself.

## 4

<sup>16</sup> The Lord advances, and yet advances ;  
Always the shadow in front—always the reach'd hand,  
bringing up the laggards.

<sup>17</sup> Out of this face emerge banners and horses—O su-  
perb ! I see what is coming ;  
I see the high pioneer-caps—I see the staves of runners  
clearing the way,  
I hear victorious drums.

<sup>18</sup> This face is a life-boat ;  
 This is the face commanding and bearded, it asks no  
       odds of the rest ;  
 This face is flavor'd fruit, ready for eating ;  
 This face of a healthy honest boy is the programme of  
       all good.

<sup>19</sup> These faces bear testimony, slumbering or awake ;  
 They show their descent from the Master himself.

<sup>20</sup> Off the word I have spoken I except not one—red,  
       white, black, are all deific ;  
 In each house is the ovum—it comes forth after a thou-  
       sand years.

<sup>21</sup> Spots or cracks at the windows do not disturb me ;  
 Tall and sufficient stand behind, and make signs to me ;  
 I read the promise, and patiently wait.

<sup>22</sup> This is a full-grown lily's face,  
 She speaks to the limber-hipp'd man near the garden  
       pickets,  
*Come here, she blushinglly cries—Come nigh to me, lim-*  
       *ber-hipp'd man,*  
*Stand at my side till I lean as high as I can upon you,*  
*Fill me with albescent honey, bend down to me,*  
*Rub to me with your chafing beard, rub to my breast and*  
       *shoulders.*

## 5

<sup>23</sup> The old face of the mother of many children !  
 Whist! I am fully content.

<sup>24</sup> Lull'd and late is the smoke of the First-day morning,  
 It hangs low over the rows of trees by the fences,  
 It hangs thin by the sassafras, the wild-cherry, and the  
       cat-brier under them.

<sup>25</sup> I saw the rich ladies in full dress at the soiree,  
 I heard what the singers were singing so long,

Heard who sprang in crimson youth from the white  
froth and the water-blue.

<sup>26</sup> Behold a woman!

She looks out from her quaker cap—her face is clearer  
and more beautiful than the sky.

<sup>27</sup> She sits in an arm-chair, under the shaded porch of  
the farm-house,  
The sun just shines on her old white head.

<sup>28</sup> Her ample gown is of cream-hued linen,  
Her grandsons raised the flax, and her granddaugh-  
ters spun it with the distaff and the wheel.

<sup>29</sup> The melodious character of the earth,  
The finish beyond which philosophy cannot go, and  
does not wish to go,  
The justified mother of men.



## MANHATTAN'S STREETS I SAUNTER'D, PONDERING.

### 1

<sup>1</sup> MANHATTAN'S streets I saunter'd, pondering,  
On time, space, reality—on such as these, and abreast  
with them, prudence.

### 2

<sup>2</sup> After all, the last explanation remains to be made  
about prudence;  
Little and large alike drop quietly aside from the pru-  
dence that suits immortality.

<sup>3</sup> The Soul is of itself;  
All verges to it—all has reference to what ensues;  
All that a person does, says, thinks, is of consequence;

Not a move can a man or woman make, that affects him or her in a day, month, any part of the direct life-time, or the hour of death, but the same affects him or her onward afterward through the indirect life-time.

## 3

<sup>4</sup> The indirect is just as much as the direct,  
The spirit receives from the body just as much as it  
gives to the body, if not more.

<sup>5</sup> Not one word or deed—not venereal sore, discoloration, privacy of the onanist, putridity of gluttons or rum-drinkers, speculation, cunning, betrayal, murder, seduction, prostitution, but has results beyond death, as really as before death.

## 4

<sup>6</sup> Charity and personal force are the only investments worth anything.

<sup>7</sup> No specification is necessary—all that a male or female does, that is vigorous, benevolent, clean, is so much profit to him or her, in the unshakable order of the universe, and through the whole scope of it, forever.

## 5

<sup>8</sup> Who has been wise, receives interest,  
Savage, felon, President, judge, farmer, sailor, mechanic, literat, young, old, it is the same,  
The interest will come round—all will come round.

<sup>9</sup> Singly, wholly, to affect now, affected their time, will  
forever affect, all of the past, and all of the  
present, and all of the future,  
All the brave actions of war and peace,



All help given to relatives, strangers, the poor, old,  
sorrowful, young children, widows, the sick, and  
to shunn'd persons,  
All furtherance of fugitives, and of the escape of slaves,  
All self-denial that stood steady and aloof on wrecks,  
and saw others fill the seats of the boats,  
All offering of substance or life for the good old cause,  
or for a friend's sake, or opinion's sake,  
All pains of enthusiasts, scoff'd at by their neighbors,  
All the limitless sweet love and precious suffering of  
mothers,  
All honest men baffled in strifes recorded or unre-  
corded,  
All the grandeur and good of ancient nations whose  
fragments we inherit,  
All the good of the dozens of ancient nations un-  
known to us by name, date, location,  
All that was ever manfully begun, whether it suc-  
ceeded or no,  
All suggestions of the divine mind of man, or the  
divinity of his mouth, or the shaping of his great  
hands ;  
All that is well thought or said this day on any part  
of the globe—or on any of the wandering stars,  
or on any of the fix'd stars, by those there as  
we are here ;  
All that is henceforth to be thought or done by you,  
whoever you are, or by any one ;  
These inure, have inured, shall inure, to the identities  
from which they sprang, or shall spring.

## 6

<sup>10</sup> Did you guess anything lived only its moment ?  
The world does not so exist—no parts palpable or im-  
palpable so exist ;  
No consummation exists without being from some  
long previous consummation—and that from  
some other,  
Without the farthest conceivable one coming a bit  
nearer the beginning than any.

## 7

<sup>11</sup> Whatever satisfies Souls is true ;  
Prudence entirely satisfies the craving and glut of  
Souls ;  
Itself only finally satisfies the Soul ;  
The Soul has that measureless pride which revolts from  
every lesson but its own.

## 8

<sup>12</sup> Now I give you an inkling ;  
Now I breathe the word of the prudence that walks  
abreast with time, space, reality,  
That answers the pride which refuses every lesson but  
its own.

<sup>13</sup> What is prudence, is indivisible,  
Declines to separate one part of life from every part,  
Divides not the righteous from the unrighteous, or the  
living from the dead,  
Matches every thought or act by its correlative,  
Knows no possible forgiveness, or deputed atonement,  
Knows that the young man who composedly peril'd  
his life and lost it, has done exceedingly well  
for himself, without doubt,  
That he who never peril'd his life, but retains it to old  
age in riches and ease, has probably achiev'd  
nothing for himself worth mentioning ;  
Knows that only that person has really learn'd, who  
has learn'd to prefer results,  
Who favors Body and Soul the same,  
Who perceives the indirect assuredly following the  
direct,  
Who in his spirit in any emergency whatever neither  
hurries or avoids death.

## All is Truth.

<sup>1</sup> O ME, man of slack faith so long !  
Standing aloof—denying portions so long ;  
Only aware to-day of compact, all-diffused truth ;  
Discovering to-day there is no lie, or form of lie, and  
    can be none, but grows as inevitably upon itself  
    as the truth does upon itself,  
Or as any law of the earth, or any natural production  
    of the earth does.

<sup>2</sup> (This is curious, and may not be realized immediately  
    —But it must be realized ;  
I feel in myself that I represent falsehoods equally with  
    the rest,  
And that the universe does.)

<sup>3</sup> Where has fail'd a perfect return, indifferent of lies or  
    the truth ?  
Is it upon the ground, or in water or fire ? or in the  
    spirit of man ? or in the meat and blood ?

<sup>4</sup> Meditating among liars, and retreating sternly into  
    myself, I see that there are really no liars or lies  
    after all,  
And that nothing fails its perfect return—And that  
    what are called lies are perfect returns,  
And that each thing exactly represents itself, and what  
    has preceded it,  
And that the truth includes all, and is compact, just as  
    much as space is compact,  
And that there is no flaw or vacuum in the amount of  
    the truth—but that all is truth without excep-  
    tion ;  
And henceforth I will go celebrate anything I see or  
    am,  
And sing and laugh, and deny nothing.

## Voices.

<sup>1</sup> Now I make a leaf of Voices—for I have found nothing  
mightier than they are,  
And I have found that no word spoken, but is beautiful,  
in its place.

<sup>2</sup> O what is it in me that makes me tremble so at voices?  
Surely, whoever speaks to me in the right voice, him or  
her I shall follow,  
As the water follows the moon, silently, with fluid steps,  
anywhere around the globe.

<sup>3</sup> All waits for the right voices ;  
Where is the practis'd and perfect organ ? Where is  
the develop'd Soul ?  
For I see every word utter'd thence, has deeper, sweeter,  
new sounds, impossible on less terms.

<sup>4</sup> I see brains and lips closed—tympan and temples  
unstruck,  
Until that comes which has the quality to strike and to  
unclose,  
Until that comes which has the quality to bring forth  
what lies slumbering, forever ready, in all words.

# MARCHES NOW THE WAR IS OVER.

---

AS I SAT ALONE BY BLUE ONTARIO'S SHORE.

1

<sup>1</sup> As I a sat alone, by blue Ontario's shore,  
As I mused of these mighty days, and of peace return'd,  
and the dead that return no more,  
A Phantom, gigantic, superb, with stern visage, accosted  
me ;  
*Chant me the poem, it said, that comes from the soul of  
America—chant me the carol of victory ;  
And strike up the marches of Libertad—marches more  
powerful yet ;  
And sing me before you go, the song of the throes of  
Democracy.*

<sup>2</sup> (Democracy—the destin'd conqueror—yet treacherous  
lip-smiles everywhere,  
And Death and infidelity at every step.)

2

<sup>3</sup> A Nation announcing itself,  
I myself make the only growth by which I can be ap-  
preciated,  
I reject none, accept all, then reproduce all in my own  
forms.



<sup>4</sup> A breed whose proof is in time and deeds ;  
What we are, we are—nativity is answer enough to  
objections ;  
We wield ourselves as a weapon is wielded,  
We are powerful and tremendous in ourselves,  
We are executive in ourselves—We are sufficient in the  
variety of ourselves,  
We are the most beautiful to ourselves, and in ourselves ;  
We stand self-pois'd in the middle, branching thence  
over the world ;  
From Missouri, Nebraska, or Kansas, laughing attacks  
to scorn.

<sup>5</sup> Nothing is sinful to us outside of ourselves,  
Whatever appears, whatever does not appear, we are  
beautiful or sinful in ourselves only.

<sup>6</sup> (O mother ! O sisters dear !  
If we are lost, no victor else has destroy'd us ;  
It is by ourselves we go down to eternal night.)

## 3

<sup>7</sup> Have you thought there could be but a single  
Supreme ?  
There can be any number of Supremes—One does not  
countervail another, any more than one eyesight  
countervails another, or one life countervails  
another.

<sup>8</sup> All is eligible to all,  
All is for individuals—All is for you,  
No condition is prohibited—not God's, or any.

<sup>9</sup> All comes by the body—only health puts you rapport  
with the universe.

<sup>10</sup> Produce great persons, the rest follows.

4

<sup>11</sup> America isolated I sing ;  
I say that works made here in the spirit of other lands,  
are so much poison in The States.

<sup>12</sup> (How dare such insects as we see assume to write  
poems for America ?  
For our victorious armies, and the offspring following  
the armies ?)

<sup>13</sup> Piety and conformity to them that like .  
Peace, obesity, allegiance, to them that like !  
I am he who tauntingly compels men, women, nations,  
Crying, Leap from your seats, and contend for your  
lives !

<sup>14</sup> I am he who walks the States with a barb'd tongue,  
questioning every one I meet ;  
Who are you, that wanted only to be told what you  
knew before ?  
Who are you, that wanted only a book to join you in  
your nonsense ?

<sup>15</sup> (With pangs and cries, as thine own, O bearer of  
many children !  
These clamors wild, to a race of pride I give.)

<sup>16</sup> O lands ! would you be freer than all that has ever  
been before ?  
If you would be freer than all that has been before,  
come listen to me.

<sup>17</sup> Fear grace—Fear elegance, civilization, delicatessen,  
Fear the mellow sweet, the sucking of honey-juice ;  
Beware the advancing mortal ripening of nature,  
Beware what precedes the decay of the ruggedness of  
states and men.

<sup>18</sup> Ages, precedents, have long been accumulating undi-  
rected materials,  
America brings builders, and brings its own styles.

<sup>19</sup> The immortal poets of Asia and Europe have done  
their work, and pass'd to other spheres,  
A work remains, the work of surpassing all they have  
done.

<sup>20</sup> America, curious toward foreign characters, stands  
by its own at all hazards,  
Stands removed, spacious, composite, sound—initiates  
the true use of precedents,  
Does not repel them, or the past, or what they have  
produced under their forms,  
Takes the lesson with calmness, perceives the corpse  
slowly borne from the house,  
Perceives that it waits a little while in the door—that  
it was fittest for its days,  
That its life has descended to the stalwart and well-  
shaped heir who approaches,  
And that he shall be fittest for his days.

<sup>21</sup> Any period, one nation must lead,  
One land must be the promise and reliance of the  
future.

<sup>22</sup> These States are the amplest poem,  
Here is not merely a nation, but a teeming nation of  
nations,  
Here the doings of men correspond with the broadcast  
doings of the day and night,  
Here is what moves in magnificent masses, careless of  
particulars,  
Here are the roughs, beards, friendliness, combative-  
ness, the Soul loves,  
Here the flowing trains—here the crowds, equality,  
diversity, the Soul loves.

6

<sup>23</sup> Land of lands, and bards to corroborate!  
 Of them, standing among them, one lifts to the light his  
     west-bred face,  
 To him the hereditary countenance bequeath'd, both  
     mother's and father's,  
 His first parts substances, earth, water, animals, trees,  
 Built of the common stock, having room for far and  
     near,  
 Used to dispense with other lands, incarnating this  
     land,  
 Attracting it Body and Soul to himself, hanging on its  
     neck with incomparable love,  
 Plunging his seminal muscle into its merits and de-  
     merits,  
 Making its cities, beginnings, events, diversities, wars,  
     vocal in him,  
 Making its rivers, lakes, bays, embouchure in him,  
 Mississippi with yearly freshets and changing chutes—  
     Columbia, Niagara, Hudson, spending them-  
     selves lovingly in him,  
 If the Atlantic coast stretch, or the Pacific coast stretch,  
     he stretching with them north or south,  
 Spanning between them, east and west, and touching  
     whatever is between them,  
 Growths growing from him to offset the growth of  
     pine, cedar, hemlock, live-oak, locust, chestnut,  
     hickory, cotton-wood, orange, magnolia,  
 Tangles as tangled in him as any cane-brake or swamp,  
 He likening sides and peaks of mountains, forests  
     coated with northern transparent ice,  
 Off him pasturage sweet and natural as savanna, up-  
     land, prairie,  
 Through him flights, whirls, screams, answering those  
     of the fish-hawk, mocking-bird, night-heron, and  
     eagle ;  
 His spirit surrounding his country's spirit, unclosed to  
     good and evil,  
 Surrounding the essences of real things, old times and  
     present times,

Surrounding just found shores, islands, tribes of red  
aborigines,  
Weather-beaten vessels, landings, settlements, embryo  
stature and muscle,  
The haughty defiance of the Year 1—war, peace, the  
formation of the Constitution,  
The separate States, the simple, elastic scheme, the im-  
migrants,  
The Union, always swarming with blatherers, and  
always sure and impregnable,  
The unsurvey'd interior, log-houses, clearings, wild  
animals, hunters, trappers ;  
Surrounding the multiform agriculture, mines, tem-  
perature, the gestation of new States,  
Congress convening every Twelfth-month, the mem-  
bers duly coming up from the uttermost parts ;  
Surrounding the noble character of mechanics and  
farmers, especially the young men,  
Responding their manners, speech, dress, friendships—  
the gait they have of persons who never knew  
how it felt to stand in the presence of superiors,  
The freshness and candor of their physiognomy, the  
copiousness and decision of their phrenology,  
The picturesque looseness of their carriage, their fierce-  
ness when wrong'd,  
The fluency of their speech, their delight in music, their  
curiosity, good temper, and open-handedness—  
the whole composite make,  
The prevailing ardor and enterprise, the large amative-  
ness,  
The perfect equality of the female with the male, the  
fluid movement of the population,  
The superior marine, free commerce, fisheries, whaling,  
gold-digging,  
Wharf-hemm'd cities, railroad and steamboat lines, in-  
tersecting all points,  
Factories, mercantile life, labor-saving machinery, the  
north-east, north-west, south-west,  
Manhattan firemen, the Yankee swap, southern planta-  
tion life,



Slavery—the murderous, treacherous conspiracy to raise  
it upon the ruins of all the rest ;  
On and on to the grapple with it—Assassin ! then your  
life or ours be the stake—and respite no more.

7

<sup>24</sup> (Lo ! high toward heaven, this day,  
Libertad ! from the conqueress' field return'd,  
I mark the new aureola around your head ;  
No more of soft astral, but dazzling and fierce,  
With war's flames, and the lambent lightnings playing,  
And your port immovable where you stand ;  
With still the inextinguishable glance, and the clench'd  
and lifted fist,  
And your foot on the neck of the menacing one, the  
scorner, utterly crush'd beneath you ;  
The menacing, arrogant one, that strode and advanced  
with his senseless scorn, bearing the murderous  
knife ;  
—Lo ! the wide swelling one, the braggart, that would  
yesterday do so much !  
To-day a carrion dead and damn'd, the despised of all  
the earth !  
An offal rank, to the dunghill maggots spurn'd.)

8

<sup>25</sup> Others take finish, but the Republic is ever construc-  
tive, and ever keeps vista ;  
Others adorn the past—but you, O days of the present,  
I adorn you !  
O days of the future, I believe in you ! I isolate myself  
for your sake ;  
O America, because you build for mankind, I build for  
you !  
O well-beloved stone-cutters ! I lead them who plan with  
decision and science,  
I lead the present with friendly hand toward the fu-  
ture.

<sup>26</sup> Bravas to all impulses sending sane children to the  
next age !  
But damn that which spends itself, with no thought of  
the stain, pains, dismay, feebleness, it is be-  
queathing.

## 9

<sup>27</sup> I listened to the Phantom by Ontario's shore,  
I heard the voice arising, demanding bards ;  
By them, all native and grand—by them alone can The  
States be fused into the compact organism of a  
Nation.

<sup>28</sup> To hold men together by paper and seal, or by com-  
pulsion, is no account ;  
That only holds men together which aggregates all in  
a living principle, as the hold of the limbs of the  
body, or the fibres of plants.

<sup>29</sup> Of all races and eras, These States, with veins full of  
poetical stuff, most need poets, and are to have  
the greatest, and use them the greatest ;  
Their Presidents shall not be their common referee so  
much as their poets shall.

<sup>30</sup> (Soul of love, and tongue of fire !  
Eye to pierce the deepest deeps, and sweep the world !  
—Ah, mother ! prolific and full in all besides—yet how  
long barren, barren ?)

## 10

<sup>31</sup> Of These States, the poet is the equable man,  
Not in him, but off from him, things are grotesque,  
eccentric, fail of their full returns,  
Nothing out of its place is good, nothing in its place is  
bad,  
He bestows on every object or quality its fit proportion,  
neither more nor less,  
He is the arbiter of the diverse, he is the key,  
He is the equalizer of his age and land,

He supplies what wants supplying—he checks what wants checking,

In peace, out of him speaks the spirit of peace, large, rich, thrifty, building populous towns, encouraging agriculture, arts, commerce, lighting the study of man, the Soul, health, immortality, government ;

In war, he is the best backer of the war—he fetches artillery as good as the engineer's—he can make every word he speaks draw blood ;

The years straying toward infidelity, he withholds by his steady faith,

He is no arguer, he is judgment—(Nature accepts him absolutely ;)

He judges not as the judge judges, but as the sun falling round a helpless thing ;

As he sees the farthest, he has the most faith,

His thoughts are the hymns of the praise of things,

In the dispute on God and eternity he is silent,

He sees eternity less like a play with a prologue and denouement,

He sees eternity in men and women—he does not see men and women as dreams or dots.

<sup>32</sup> For the great Idea, the idea of perfect and free individuals,

For that idea, the bard walks in advance, leader of leaders,

The attitude of him cheers up slaves, and horrifies foreign despots.

<sup>33</sup> Without extinction is Liberty ! without retrograde is Equality !

They live in the feelings of young men, and the best women ;

Not for nothing have the indomitable heads of the earth been always ready to fall for Liberty.

<sup>34</sup> For the great Idea !

That, O my brethren—that is the mission of Poets.

<sup>35</sup> Songs of stern defiance, ever ready,  
 Songs of the rapid arming, and the march,  
 The flag of peace quick-folded, and instead, the flag we  
     know,  
 Warlike flag of the great Idea.

<sup>36</sup> (Angry cloth I saw there leaping !  
 I stand again in leaden rain, your flapping folds saluting;  
 I sing you over all, flying, beckoning through the fight  
     —O the hard-contested fight !  
 O the cannons ope their rosy-flashing muzzles ! the  
     hurtled balls scream !  
 The battle-front forms amid the smoke—the volleys  
     pour incessant from the line ;  
 Hark ! the ringing word, *Charge* !—now the tussle, and  
     the furious maddening yells ;  
 Now the corpses tumble curl'd upon the ground,  
 Cold, cold in death, for precious life of you,  
 Angry cloth I saw there leaping.)

## 12

<sup>37</sup> Are you he who would assume a place to teach, or be  
     a poet here in The States ?  
 The place is august—the terms obdurate.

<sup>38</sup> Who would assume to teach here, may well prepare  
     himself, body and mind,  
 He may well survey, ponder, arm, fortify, harden, make  
     lithe, himself,  
 He shall surely be question'd beforehand by me with  
     many and stern questions.

<sup>39</sup> Who are you, indeed, who would talk or sing to  
     America ?  
 Have you studied out the land, its idioms and men ?  
 Have you learn'd the physiology, phrenology, politics,  
     geography, pride, freedom, friendship, of the  
     land ? its substratums and objects ?

Have you consider'd the organic compact of the first day of the first year of Independence, sign'd by the Commissioners, ratified by The States, and read by Washington at the head of the army?

Have you possess'd yourself of the Federal Constitution?

Do you see who have left all feudal processes and poems behind them, and assumed the poems and processes of Democracy?

Are you faithful to things? do you teach as the land and sea, the bodies of men, womanhood, amateness, angers, teach?

Have you sped through fleeting customs, popularities?

Can you hold your hand against all seductions, follies, whirls, fierce contentions? are you very strong? are you really of the whole people?

Are you not of some coterie? some school or mere religion?

Are you done with reviews and criticisms of life? animating now to life itself?

Have you vivified yourself from the maternity of These States?

Have you too the old, ever-fresh, forbearance and impartiality?

Do you hold the like love for those hardening to maturity; for the last-born? little and big? and for the errant?

<sup>40</sup> What is this you bring my America?

Is it uniform with my country?

Is it not something that has been better told or done before?

Have you not imported this, or the spirit of it, in some ship?

Is it not a mere tale? a rhyme? a prettiness? is the good old cause in it?

Has it not dangled long at the heels of the poets, politicians, literats, of enemies' lands?

Does it not assume that what is notoriously gone is still here?

Does it answer universal needs? will it improve manners?



- Does it sound, with trumpet-voice, the proud victory of  
the Union, in that secession war?
- Can your performance face the open fields and the sea-  
side?
- Will it absorb into me as I absorb food, air—to appear  
again in my strength, gait, face?
- Have real employments contributed to it? original  
makers—not mere amanuenses?
- Does it meet modern discoveries, calibers, facts, face to  
face?
- What does it mean to me? to American persons, pro-  
gresses, cities? Chicago, Kanada, Arkansas? the  
planter, Yankee, Georgian, native, immigrant,  
sailors, squatters, old States, new States?
- Does it encompass all The States, and the unexcep-  
tional rights of all the men and women of the  
earth? (the genital impulse of These States;)
- Does it see behind the apparent custodians, the real  
custodians, standing, menacing, silent—the me-  
chanics, Manhattanese, western men, southerners,  
significant alike in their apathy, and in the  
promptness of their love?
- Does it see what finally befalls, and has always finally  
befallen, each temporizer, patcher, outsider, par-  
tialist, alarmist, infidel, who has ever ask'd any-  
thing of America?
- What mocking and scornful negligence?  
The track strew'd with the dust of skeletons;  
By the roadside others disdainfully toss'd.

## 13

- <sup>41</sup> Rhymes and rhymers pass away—poems distill'd  
from foreign poems pass away,  
The swarms of reflectors and the polite pass, and leave  
ashes;
- Admirers, importers, obedient persons, make but the  
soil of literature;
- America justifies itself, give it time—no disguise can  
deceive it, or conceal from it—it is impassive  
enough,

Only toward the likes of itself will it advance to meet  
 them,  
 If its poets appear, it will in due time advance to meet  
 them—there is no fear of mistake,  
 (The proof of a poet shall be sternly deferr'd, till his  
 country absorbs him as affectionately as he has  
 absorb'd it.)

<sup>42</sup> He masters whose spirit masters—he tastes sweetest  
 who results sweetest in the long run ;  
 The blood of the brawn beloved of time is unconstraint;  
 In the need of poems, philosophy, politics, manners,  
 engineering, an appropriate native grand-opera,  
 shipcraft, any craft, he or she is greatest who  
 contributes the greatest original practical ex-  
 ample.

<sup>43</sup> Already a nonchalant breed, silently emerging, ap-  
 pears on the streets,  
 People's lips salute only doers, lovers, satisfiers, positive  
 knowers ;  
 There will shortly be no more priests—I say their work  
 is done,  
 Death is without emergencies here, but life is perpet-  
 ual emergencies here,  
 Are your body, days, manners, superb? after death  
 you shall be superb ;  
 Justice, health, self-esteem, clear the way with irresist-  
 ible power ;  
 How dare you place anything before a man ?

14

<sup>44</sup> Fall behind me, States !  
 A man before all—myself, typical, before all.

<sup>45</sup> Give me the pay I have served for !  
 Give me to sing the song of the great Idea ! take all  
 the rest ;  
 I have loved the earth, sun, animals—I have despised  
 riches,

I have given alms to every one that ask'd, stood up for  
 the stupid and crazy, devoted my income and  
 labor to others,  
 I have hated tyrants, argued not concerning God, had  
 patience and indulgence toward the people,  
 taken off my hat to nothing known or unknown,  
 I have gone freely with powerful uneducated persons,  
 and with the young, and with the mothers of  
 families,  
 I have read these leaves to myself in the open air—I  
 have tried them by trees, stars, rivers,  
 I have dismiss'd whatever insulted my own Soul or  
 defiled my Body,  
 I have claim'd nothing to myself which I have not  
 carefully claim'd for others on the same terms,  
 I have sped to the camps, and comrades found and  
 accepted from every State ;  
 (In war of you, as well as peace, my suit is good, Amer-  
 ica—sadly I boast ;  
 Upon this breast has many a dying soldier lean'd, to  
 breathe his last ;  
 This arm, this hand, this voice, have nourish'd, rais'd,  
 restored,  
 To life recalling many a prostrate form :)  
 —I am willing to wait to be understood by the growth  
 of the taste of myself,  
 I reject none, I permit all.

<sup>46</sup> (Say, O mother! have I not to your thought been  
 faithful?  
 Have I not, through life, kept you and yours before  
 me?)

## 15

<sup>47</sup> I swear I begin to see the meaning of these things!  
 It is not the earth, it is not America, who is so great,  
 It is I who am great, or to be great—it is you up there,  
 or any one ;  
 It is to walk rapidly through civilizations, governments,  
 theories,

Through poems, pageants, shows, to form great individuals.

<sup>48</sup> Underneath all, individuals!

I swear nothing is good to me now that ignores individuals,

The American compact is altogether with individuals,  
The only government is that which makes minute of individuals,

The whole theory of the universe is directed to one single individual—namely, to You.

<sup>49</sup> (Mother! with subtle sense severe—with the naked sword in your hand,

I saw you at last refuse to treat but directly with individuals.)

16

<sup>50</sup> Underneath all, nativity,

I swear I will stand by my own nativity—pious or impious, so be it ;

I swear I am charm'd with nothing except nativity,  
Men, women, cities, nations, are only beautiful from nativity.

<sup>51</sup> Underneath all is the need of the expression of love for men and women,

I swear I have seen enough of mean and impotent modes of expressing love for men and women,  
After this day I take my own modes of expressing love for men and women.

<sup>52</sup> I swear I will have each quality of my race in myself,

(Talk as you like, he only suits These States whose manners favor the audacity and sublime turbulence of The States.)

<sup>53</sup> Underneath the lessons of things, spirits, Nature, governments, ownerships, I swear I perceive other lessons,

Underneath all, to me is myself—to you, yourself—(the same monotonous old song.)

## 17

<sup>54</sup> O I see now, flashing, that this America is only you  
and me,  
Its power, weapons, testimony, are you and me,  
Its crimes, lies, thefts, defections, slavery, are you and  
me,  
Its Congress is you and me—the officers, capitols, ar-  
mies, ships, are you and me,  
Its endless gestations of new States are you and me,  
The war—that war so bloody and grim—the war I will  
henceforth forget—was you and me,  
Natural and artificial are you and me,  
Freedom, language, poems, employments, are you and  
me,  
Past, present, future, are you and me.

## 18

<sup>55</sup> I swear I dare not shirk any part of myself,  
Not any part of America, good or bad,  
Not the promulgation of Liberty—not to cheer up slaves  
and horrify foreign despots,  
Not to build for that which builds for mankind,  
Not to balance ranks, complexions, creeds, and the  
sexes,  
Not to justify science, nor the march of equality,  
Nor to feed the arrogant blood of the brawn beloved  
of time.

<sup>56</sup> I swear I am for those that have never been mas-  
ter'd!  
For men and women whose tempers have never been  
master'd,  
For those whom laws, theories, conventions, can never  
master.



<sup>57</sup> I swear I am for those who walk abreast with the  
whole earth!

Who inaugurate one, to inaugurate all.

<sup>58</sup> I swear I will not be outfaced by irrational things!  
I will penetrate what it is in them that is sarcastic upon  
me!

I will make cities and civilizations defer to me!

This is what I have learnt from America—it is the  
amount—and it I teach again.

<sup>59</sup> (Democracy! while weapons were everywhere aim'd  
at your breast,

I saw you serenely give birth to immortal children—  
saw in dreams your dilating form;

Saw you with spreading mantle covering the world.)

19

<sup>60</sup> I will confront these shows of the day and night!

I will know if I am to be less than they!

I will see if I am not as majestic as they!

I will see if I am not as subtle and real as they!

I will see if I am to be less generous than they!

<sup>61</sup> I will see if I have no meaning, while the houses and  
ships have meaning!

I will see if the fishes and birds are to be enough for  
themselves, and I am not to be enough for my-  
self.

20

<sup>62</sup> I match my spirit against yours, you orbs, growths,  
mountains, brutes,

Copious as you are, I absorb you all in myself, and be-  
come the master myself.

<sup>63</sup> America isolated, yet embodying all, what is it finally  
except myself?

These States—what are they except myself?

<sup>64</sup> I know now why the earth is gross, tantalizing,  
wicked—it is for my sake,  
I take you to be mine, you beautiful, terrible, rude  
forms.

<sup>65</sup> (Mother! bend down, bend close to me your face!  
I know not what these plots and wars, and deferments  
are for;  
I know not fruition's success—but I know that through  
war and peace your work goes on, and must yet  
go on.)

## 21

<sup>66</sup> . . . . . Thus, by blue Ontario's shore,  
While the winds fann'd me, and the waves came troop-  
ing toward me,  
I thrill'd with the Power's pulsations—and the charm  
of my theme was upon me,  
Till the tissues that held me, parted their ties upon  
me.

<sup>67</sup> And I saw the free Souls of poets;  
The loftiest bards of past ages strode before me,  
Strange, large men, long unwaked, undisclosed, were  
disclosed to me.

## 22

<sup>68</sup> O my rapt verse, my call—mock me not!  
Not for the bards of the past—not to invoke them have  
I launch'd you forth,  
Not to call even those lofty bards here by Ontario's  
shores,  
Have I sung, so capricious and loud, my savage song.

<sup>69</sup> Bards for my own land, only, I invoke;  
(For the war, the war is over—the field is clear'd,)  
Till they strike up marches henceforth triumphant and  
onward,  
To cheer, O mother, your boundless, expectant soul.

<sup>70</sup> Bards grand as these days so grand!  
 Bards of the great Idea! Bards of the peaceful inven-  
 tions! (for the war, the war is over!)  
 Yet Bards of the latent armies—a million soldiers wait-  
 ing ever-ready,  
 Bards towering like hills—(no more these dots, these  
 pigmies, these little piping straws, these gnats,  
 that fill the hour, to pass for poets;)  
 Bards with songs as from burning coals, or the light-  
 ning's fork'd stripes!  
 Ample Ohio's bards—bards for California! inland  
 bards—bards of the war;  
 (As a wheel turns on its axle, so I find my chants turn-  
 ing finally on the war;)  
 Bards of pride! Bards tallying the ocean's roar, and  
 the swooping eagle's scream!  
 You, by my charm, I invoke!



## PIONEERS! O PIONEERS!

### 1

COME, my tan-faced children,  
 Follow well in order, get your weapons ready;  
 Have you your pistols? have you your sharp edged  
 axes?  
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

### 2

For we cannot tarry here,  
 We must march my darlings, we must bear the brunt  
 of danger,  
 We, the youthful sinewy races, all the rest on us depend,  
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

## 3

O you youths, western youths,  
So impatient, full of action, full of manly pride and  
friendship,  
Plain I see you, western youths, see you tramping with  
the foremost,  
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

## 4

Have the elder races halted ?  
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied, over there  
beyond the seas ?  
We take up the task eternal, and the burden, and the  
lesson,  
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

## 5

All the past we leave behind ;  
We debouch upon a newer, mightier world, varied  
world ;  
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and  
the march,  
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

## 6

We detachments steady throwing,  
Down the edges, through the passes, up the mountains  
steep,  
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing, as we go, the  
unknown ways,  
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

## 7

We primeval forests felling,  
We the rivers stemming, vexing we, and piercing deep  
the mines within ;  
We the surface broad surveying, we the virgin soil up-  
heaving,  
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

8

Colorado men are we,  
From the peaks gigantic, from the great sierras and the  
high plateaus,  
From the mine and from the gully, from the hunting  
trail we come,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

9

From Nebraska, from Arkansas,  
Central inland race are we, from Missouri, with the  
continental blood intervein'd ;  
All the hands of comrades clasping, all the Southern,  
all the Northern,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

10

O resistless, restless race!  
O beloved race in all! O my breast aches with tender  
love for all!  
O I mourn and yet exult—I am rapt with love for all,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

11

Raise the mighty mother mistress,  
Waving high the delicate mistress, over all the starry  
mistress, (bend your heads all,)  
Raise the fang'd and warlike mistress, stern, impassive,  
weapon'd mistress,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

12

See, my children, resolute children,  
By those swarms upon our rear, we must never yield or  
falter,  
Ages back in ghostly millions, frowning there behind us  
urging,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!



## 13

On and on, the compact ranks,  
With accessions ever waiting, with the places of the  
dead quickly fill'd,  
Through the battle, through defeat, moving yet and  
never stopping,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

## 14

O to die advancing on!  
Are there some of us to droop and die? has the hour  
come?  
Then upon the march we fittest die, soon and sure the  
gap is fill'd,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

## 15

All the pulses of the world,  
Falling in, they beat for us, with the western move-  
ment beat;  
Holding single or together, steady moving, to the front,  
all for us,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

## 16

Life's involv'd and varied pageants,  
All the forms and shows, all the workmen at their  
work,  
All the seamen and the landsmen, all the masters with  
their slaves,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

## 17

All the hapless silent lovers,  
All the prisoners in the prisons, all the righteous and  
the wicked,  
All the joyous, all the sorrowing, all the living, all the  
dying,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

18

I too with my soul and body,  
We, a curious trio, picking, wandering on our way,  
Through these shores, amid the shadows, with the ap-  
paritions pressing,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

19

Lo! the darting bowling orb!  
Lo! the brother orbs around! all the clustering suns  
and planets;  
All the dazzling days, all the mystic nights with dreams,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

20

These are of us, they are with us,  
All for primal needed work, while the followers there  
in embryo wait behind,  
We to-day's procession heading, we the route for travel  
clearing,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

21

O you daughters of the west!  
O you young and elder daughters! O you mothers and  
you wives!  
Never must you be divided, in our ranks you move  
united,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

22

Minstrels latent on the prairies!  
(Shrouded bards of other lands! you may sleep—you  
have done your work;)  
Soon I hear you coming warbling, soon you rise and  
tramp amid us,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

23

Not for delectations sweet ;  
Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and  
the studious ;  
Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame en-  
joyment,  
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

24

Do the feasters gluttonous feast ?  
Do the corpulent sleepers sleep ? have they lock'd and  
bolted doors ?  
Still be ours the diet hard, and the blanket on the  
ground,  
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

25

Has the night descended ?  
Was the road of late so toilsome ? did we stop discour-  
aged, nodding on our way ?  
Yet a passing hour I yield you, in your tracks to pause  
oblivious,  
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

26

Till with sound of trumpet,  
Far, far off the day-break call—hark ! how loud and  
clear I hear it wind ;  
Swift ! to the head of the army !—swift ! spring to your  
places,  
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

## RESPONDEZ !

RESPONDEZ ! Respondez !

(The war is completed—the price is paid—the title is settled beyond recall ;)

Let every one answer ! let those who sleep be waked !  
let none evade !

Must we still go on with our affectations and sneaking ?  
Let me bring this to a close—I pronounce openly for  
a new distribution of roles ;

Let that which stood in front go behind ! and let that  
which was behind advance to the front and  
speak ;

Let murderers, bigots, fools, unclean persons, offer new  
propositions !

Let the old propositions be postponed !

Let faces and theories be turn'd inside out ! let mean-  
ings be freely criminal, as well as results !

Let there be no suggestion above the suggestion of  
drudgery !

Let none be pointed toward his destination ! (Say ! do  
you know your destination ?)

Let men and women be mock'd with bodies and mock'd  
with Souls !

Let the love that waits in them, wait ! let it die, or pass  
still-born to other spheres !

Let the sympathy that waits in every man, wait ! or let  
it also pass, a dwarf, to other spheres !

Let contradictions prevail ! let one thing contradict  
another ! and let one line of my poems contra-  
dict another !

Let the people sprawl with yearning, aimless hands !  
let their tongues be broken ! let their eyes be  
discouraged ! let none descend into their hearts  
with the fresh lusciousness of love !

(Stified, O days ! O lands ! in every public and private  
corruption !

Smother'd in thievery, impotence, shamelessness, moun-  
tain-high ;

Brazen effrontery, scheming, rolling like ocean's waves  
around and upon you, O my days ! my lands !

- For not even those thunderstorms, nor fiercest lightnings of the war, have purified the atmosphere ;)
- Let the theory of America still be management, caste, comparison! (Say! what other theory would you?)
- Let them that distrust birth and death still lead the rest! (Say! why shall they not lead you?)
- Let the crust of hell be neared and trod on! let the days be darker than the nights! let slumber bring less slumber than waking time brings!
- Let the world never appear to him or her for whom it was all made!
- Let the heart of the young man still exile itself from the heart of the old man! and let the heart of the old man be exiled from that of the young man!
- Let the sun and moon go! let scenery take the applause of the audience! let there be apathy under the stars!
- Let freedom prove no man's inalienable right! every one who can tyrannize, let him tyrannize to his satisfaction!
- Let none but infidels be countenanced!
- Let the eminence of meanness, treachery, sarcasm, hate, greed, indecency, impotence, lust, be taken for granted above all! let writers, judges, governments, households, religions, philosophies, take such for granted above all!
- Let the worst men beget children out of the worst women!
- Let the priest still play at immortality!
- Let death be inaugurated!
- Let nothing remain but the ashes of teachers, artists, moralists, lawyers, and learn'd and polite persons!
- Let him who is without my poems be assassinated!
- Let the cow, the horse, the camel, the garden-bee—let the mud-fish, the lobster, the mussel, eel, the sting-ray, and the grunting pig-fish—let these, and the like of these, be put on a perfect equality with man and woman!



Let churches accommodate serpents, vermin, and the corpses of those who have died of the most filthy of diseases!

Let marriage slip down among fools, and be for none but fools!

Let men among themselves talk and think forever obscenely of women! and let women among themselves talk and think obscenely of men!

Let us all, without missing one, be exposed in public, naked, monthly, at the peril of our lives! let our bodies be freely handled and examined by whoever chooses!

Let nothing but copies at second hand be permitted to exist upon the earth!

Let the earth desert God, nor let there ever henceforth be mention'd the name of God!

Let there be no God!

Let there be money, business, imports, exports, custom, authority, precedents, pallor, -dyspepsia, smut, ignorance, unbelief!

Let judges and criminals be transposed! let the prison-keepers be put in prison! let those that were prisoners take the keys! (Say! why might they not just as well be transposed?)

Let the slaves be masters! let the masters become slaves!

Let the reformers descend from the stands where they are forever bawling! let an idiot or insane person appear on each of the stands!

Let the Asiatic, the African, the European, the American, and the Australian, go armed against the murderous stealthiness of each other! let them sleep armed! let none believe in good will!

Let there be no unfashionable wisdom! let such be scorn'd and derided off from the earth!

Let a floating cloud in the sky—let a wave of the sea—let growing mint, spinach, onions, tomatoes—let these be exhibited as shows, at a great price for admission!

Let all the men of These States stand aside for a few smouchers! let the few seize on what they choose! let the rest gawk, giggle, starve, obey!

- Let shadows be furnish'd with genitals ! let substances  
be deprived of their genitals !
- Let there be wealthy and immense cities—but still  
through any of them, not a single poet, savior,  
knower, lover !
- Let the infidels of These States laugh all faith away !  
If one man be found who has faith, let the rest set upon  
him !
- Let them affright faith ! let them destroy the power of  
breeding faith !
- Let the she-harlots and the he-harlots be prudent ! let  
them dance on, while seeming lasts ! (O seeming !  
seeming ! seeming !)
- Let the preachers recite creeds ! let them still teach  
only what they have been taught !
- Let insanity still have charge of sanity !
- Let books take the place of trees, animals, rivers, clouds !
- Let the daub'd portraits of heroes supersede heroes !
- Let the manhood of man never take steps after itself !
- Let it take steps after eunuchs, and after consumptive  
and genteel persons !
- Let the white person again tread the black person  
under his heel ! (Say ! which is trodden under  
heel, after all ?)
- Let the reflections of the things of the world be studied  
in mirrors ! let the things themselves still con-  
tinue unstudied !
- Let a man seek pleasure everywhere except in himself !
- Let a woman seek happiness everywhere except in  
herself !
- (What real happiness have you had one single hour  
through your whole life ?)
- Let the limited years of life do nothing for the limitless  
years of death ! (What do you suppose death  
will do, then ?)

## TURN O LIBERTAD.

TURN, O Libertad, for the war is over,  
 (From it and all henceforth expanding, doubting no  
     more, resolute, sweeping the world,)  
 Turn from lands retrospective, recording proofs of the  
     past ;  
 From the singers that sing the trailing glories of the  
     past ;  
 From the chants of the feudal world—the triumphs of  
     kings, slavery, caste ;  
 Turn to the world, the triumphs reserv'd and to come—  
     give up that backward world ;  
 Leave to the singers of hitherto—give them the trailing  
     past ;  
 But what remains, remains for singers for you—wars  
     to come are for you ;  
 (Lo ! how the wars of the past have duly inured to you  
     —and the wars of the present also inure :)  
 —Then turn, and be not alarm'd, O Libertad—turn  
     your undying face,  
 To where the future, greater than all the past,  
 Is swiftly, surely preparing for you.

---

## ADIEU TO A SOLDIER.

<sup>1</sup> ADIEU, O soldier !  
 You of the rude campaigning, (which we shared,)  
 The rapid march, the life of the camp,  
 The hot contention of opposing fronts—the long  
     manœuver,  
 Red battles with their slaughter,—the stimulus—the  
     strong, terrific game,  
 Spell of all brave and manly hearts—the trains of Time  
     through you, and like of you, all fill'd,  
 With war, and war's expression.

<sup>2</sup> Adieu, dear comrade !  
 Your mission is fulfill'd—but I, more warlike,  
 Myself, and this contentious soul of mine,  
 Still on our own campaigning bound,  
 Through untried roads, with ambushes, opponents  
     lined,  
 Through many a sharp defeat and many a crisis—often  
     baffled,  
 Here marching, ever marching on, a war fight out—  
     aye here,  
 To fiercer, weightier battles give expression.



### As I Walk These Broad, Majestic Days.

<sup>1</sup> As I walk these broad, majestic days of peace,  
 (For the war, the struggle of blood finish'd, wherein, O  
     terrific Ideal !  
 Against vast odds, having gloriously won,  
 Now thou stridest on—yet perhaps in time toward  
     denser wars,  
 Perhaps to engage in time in still more dreadful con-  
     tests, dangers,  
 Longer campaigns and crises, labors beyond all others ; )  
 —As I walk, solitary, unattended,  
 Around me I hear that eclat of the world—politics,  
     produce,  
 The announcements of recognized things—science,  
 The approved growth of cities, and the spread of inven-  
     tions.

<sup>2</sup> I see the ships, (they will last a few years,)  
 The vast factories, with their foremen and workmen,  
 And hear the indorsement of all, and do not object to  
     it.

<sup>3</sup> But I too announce solid things ;  
 Science, ships, politics, cities, factories, are not nothing  
     —I watch them,

Like a grand procession, to music of distant bugles,  
pouring, triumphantly moving—and grander  
heaving in sight ;  
They stand for realities—all is as it should be.

<sup>4</sup> Then my realities ;  
What else is so real as mine ?  
Libertad, and the divine average—Freedom to every  
slave on the face of the earth,  
The rapt promises and luminé of seers—the spiritual  
world—these centuries-lasting songs,  
And our visions, the visions of poets, the most solid  
announcements of any.

<sup>5</sup> For we support all, fuse all,  
After the rest is done and gone, we remain ;  
There is no final reliance but upon us ;  
Democracy rests finally upon us, (I, my brethren, be-  
gin it,)  
And our visions sweep through eternity.



## WEAVE IN, WEAVE IN, MY HARDY LIFE.

WEAVE in ! weave in, my hardy life !  
Weave yet a soldier strong and full, for great campaigns  
to come ;  
Weave in red blood ! weave sinews in, like ropes ! the  
senses, sight weave in !  
Weave lasting sure ! weave day and night the weft, the  
warp, incessant weave ! tire not !  
(We know not what the use, O life ! nor know the aim,  
the end—nor really aught we know ;  
But know the work, the need goes on, and shall go on  
—the death-envelop'd march of peace as well as  
war goes on ;)  
For great campaigns of peace the same, the wiry threads  
to weave ;  
We know not why or what, yet weave, forever weave.



## RACE OF VETERANS.

RACE of veterans ! Race of victors !  
Race of the soil, ready for conflict ! race of the conquer-  
ing march !  
(No more credulity's race, abiding-temper'd race ;)  
Race henceforth owning no law but the law of itself ;  
Race of passion and the storm.

---

## O SUN OF REAL PEACE.

O SUN of real peace ! O hastening light !  
O free and extatic ! O what I here, preparing, warble  
for !  
O the sun of the world will ascend, dazzling, and take  
his height—and you too, O my Ideal, will surely  
ascend !  
O so amazing and broad—up there resplendent, dart-  
ing and burning !  
O vision prophetic, stagger'd with weight of light ! with  
pouring glories !  
O lips of my soul, already becoming powerless !  
O ample and grand Presidentiads ! Now the war, the  
war is over !  
New history ! new heroes ! I project you !  
Visions of poets ! only you really last ! sweep on ! sweep  
on !  
O heights too swift and dizzy yet !  
O purged and luminous ! you threaten me more than I  
can stand !  
(I must not venture—the ground under my feet men-  
aces me—it will not support me :  
O future too immense,)—O present, I return, while yet  
I may, to you.

# LEAVES OF GRASS.



## THIS COMPOST.

### 1

<sup>1</sup> SOMETHING startles me where I thought I was safest ;  
I withdraw from the still woods I loved ;  
I will not go now on the pastures to walk ;  
I will not strip the clothes from my body to meet my  
lover the sea ;  
I will not touch my flesh to the earth, as to other flesh,  
to renew me.

<sup>2</sup> O how can it be that the ground does not sicken ?  
How can you be alive, you growths of spring ?  
How can you furnish health, you blood of herbs, roots,  
orchards, grain ?  
Are they not continually putting distemper'd corpses  
within you ?  
Is not every continent work'd over and over with sour  
dead ?

<sup>3</sup> Where have you disposed of their carcasses ?  
Those drunkards and gluttons of so many generations ;  
Where have you drawn off all the foul liquid and meat ?  
I do not see any of it upon you to-day—or perhaps I am  
deceiv'd ;  
I will run a furrow with my plough—I will press my  
spade through the sod, and turn it up under-  
neath ;  
I am sure I shall expose some of the foul meat.

## 2

<sup>4</sup> Behold this compost! behold it well!  
Perhaps every mite has once form'd part of a sick person—Yet behold!  
The grass of spring covers the prairies,  
The bean bursts noiselessly through the mould in the garden,  
The delicate spear of the onion pierces upward,  
The apple-buds cluster together on the apple-branches,  
The resurrection of the wheat appears with pale visage out of its graves,  
The tinge awakes over the willow-tree and the mulberry-tree,  
The he-birds carol mornings and evenings, while the she-birds sit on their nests,  
The young of poultry break through the hatch'd eggs,  
The new-born of animals appear—the calf is dropt from the cow, the colt from the mare,  
Out of its little hill faithfully rise the potato's dark green leaves,  
Out of its hill rises the yellow maize-stalk—the lilacs bloom in the door-yards;  
The summer growth is innocent and disdainful above all those strata of sour dead.

<sup>5</sup> What chemistry!  
That the winds are really not infectious,  
That this is no cheat, this transparent green-wash of the sea, which is so amorous after me,  
That it is safe to allow it to lick my naked body all over with its tongues,  
That it will not endanger me with the fevers that have deposited themselves in it,  
That all is clean forever and forever,  
That the cool drink from the well tastes so good,  
That blackberries are so flavorful and juicy,  
That the fruits of the apple-orchard, and of the orange-orchard—that melons, grapes, peaches, plums, will none of them poison me,  
That when I recline on the grass I do not catch any disease,

Though probably every spear of grass rises out of what  
was once a catching disease.

## 3

<sup>6</sup> Now I am terrified at the Earth! it is that calm and  
patient,  
It grows such sweet things out of such corruptions,  
It turns harmless and stainless on its axis, with such  
endless successions of diseas'd corpses,  
It distils such exquisite winds out of such infused feter,  
It renews with such unwitting looks, its prodigal, an-  
nual, sumptuous crops,  
It gives such divine materials to men, and accepts such  
leavings from them at last.



## UNNAMED LANDS.

<sup>1</sup> NATIONS ten thousand years before These States, and  
many times ten thousand years before These  
States ;  
Garner'd clusters of ages, that men and women like us  
grew up and travel'd their course, and pass'd on ;  
What vast-built cities—what orderly republics—what  
pastoral tribes and nomads ;  
What histories, rulers, heroes, perhaps transcending all  
others ;  
What laws, customs, wealth, arts, traditions ;  
What sort of marriage—what costumes—what physi-  
ology and phrenology ;  
What of liberty and slavery among them—what they  
thought of death and the soul ;  
Who were witty and wise—who beautiful and poetic—  
who brutish and undevelop'd ;  
Not a mark, not a record remains—And yet all remains.

<sup>2</sup> O I know that those men and women were not for  
nothing, any more than we are for nothing ;

I know that they belong to the scheme of the world  
every bit as much as we now belong to it, and as  
all will henceforth belong to it.

<sup>3</sup> Afar they stand—yet near to me they stand,  
Some with oval countenances, learn'd and calm,  
Some naked and savage—Some like huge collections of  
insects,  
Some in tents—herdsmen, patriarchs, tribes, horsemen,  
Some prowling through woods—Some living peaceably  
on farms, laboring, reaping, filling barns,  
Some traversing paved avenues, amid temples, palaces,  
factories, libraries, shows, courts, theatres, won-  
derful monuments.

<sup>4</sup> Are those billions of men really gone ?  
Are those women of the old experience of the earth  
gone ?  
Do their lives, cities, arts, rest only with us ?  
Did they achieve nothing for good, for themselves ?

<sup>5</sup> I believe of all those billions of men and women that  
fill'd the unnamed lands, every one exists this  
hour, here or elsewhere, invisible to us, in exact  
proportion to what he or she grew from in life,  
and out of what he or she did, felt, became, loved,  
sinn'd, in life.

<sup>6</sup> I believe that was not the end of those nations, or any  
person of them, any more than this shall be the  
end of my nation, or of me ;

Of their languages, governments, marriage, literature,  
products, games, wars, manners, crimes, prisons,  
slaves, heroes, poets, I suspect their results  
curiously await in the yet unseen world—coun-  
terparts of what accrued to them in the seen  
world,

I suspect I shall meet them there,  
I suspect I shall there find each old particular of those  
unnamed lands.



## MANNAHATTA.

<sup>1</sup> I WAS asking for something specific and perfect for  
my city,  
Whereupon, lo! upsprang the aboriginal name!

<sup>2</sup> Now I see what there is in a name, a word, liquid,  
sane, unruly, musical, self-sufficient;

I see that the word of my city is that word up there,  
Because I see that word nested in nests of water-bays,  
superb, with tall and wonderful spires,  
Rich, hemm'd thick all around with sailships and  
steamships—an island sixteen miles long, solid-  
founded,

Numberless crowded streets—high growths of iron,  
slender, strong, light, splendidly uprising to-  
ward clear skies;

Tides swift and ample, well-loved by me, toward sun-  
down,

The flowing sea-currents, the little islands, larger ad-  
joining islands, the heights, the villas,

The countless masts, the white shore-steamers, the light-  
ers, the ferry-boats, the black sea-steamers, well-  
model'd;

The down-town streets, the jobbers' houses of business  
—the houses of business of the ship-merchants,  
and money-brokers—the river-streets;

Immigrants arriving, fifteen or twenty thousand in a  
week;

The carts hauling goods—the manly race of drivers of  
horses—the brown-faced sailors;

The summer air, the bright sun shining, and the sail-  
ing clouds aloft;

The winter snows, the sleigh-bells—the broken ice in  
the river, passing along, up or down, with the  
flood-tide or ebb-tide;

The mechanics of the city, the masters, well-form'd,  
beautiful-faced, looking you straight in the eyes;

Trottoirs throng'd—vehicles—Broadway—the women—  
the shops and shows,

The parades, processions, bugles playing, flags flying,  
drums beating ;  
A million people—manners free and superb—open  
voices—hospitality—the most courageous and  
friendly young men ;  
The free city ! no slaves ! no owners of slaves !  
The beautiful city, the city of hurried and sparkling  
waters ! the city of spires and masts !  
The city nested in bays ! my city !  
The city of such women, I am mad to be with them !  
I will return after death to be with them !  
The city of such young men, I swear I cannot live  
happy, without I often go talk, walk, eat, drink,  
sleep, with them !

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## OLD IRELAND.

<sup>1</sup> FAR hence, amid an isle of wondrous beauty,  
Crouching over a grave, an ancient sorrowful mother,  
Once a queen—now lean and tatter'd, seated on the  
ground,  
Her old white hair drooping dishevel'd round her shoulders ;  
At her feet fallen an unused royal harp,  
Long silent—she too long silent—mourning her shrouded  
hope and heir ;  
Of all the earth her heart most full of sorrow, because  
most full of love.

<sup>2</sup> Yet a word, ancient mother ;  
You need crouch there no longer on the cold ground,  
with forehead between your knees ;  
O you need not sit there, veil'd in your old white hair,  
so dishevel'd ;  
For know you, the one you mourn is not in that grave ;  
It was an illusion—the heir, the son you love, was not  
really dead ;

The Lord is not dead—he is risen again, young and strong, in another country ;  
 Even while you wept there by your fallen harp, by the grave,  
 What you wept for, was translated, pass'd from the grave,  
 The winds favor'd, and the sea sail'd it,  
 And now with rosy and new blood,  
 Moves to-day in a new country.



## TO ORATISTS

<sup>1</sup> To ORATISTS—to male or female,  
 Vocalism, measure, concentration, determination, and  
 the divine power to use words.

<sup>2</sup> Are you full-lung'd and limber-lipp'd from long trial ?  
 from vigorous practice ? from physique ?  
 Do you move in these broad lands as broad as they ?  
 Come duly to the divine power to use words ?

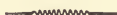
<sup>3</sup> For only at last, after many years—after chastity,  
 friendship, procreation, prudence, and nakedness ;  
 After treading ground and breasting river and lake ;  
 After a loosen'd throat—after absorbing eras, tempera-  
 ments, races—after knowledge, freedom, crimes ;  
 After complete faith—after clarifyings, elevations, and  
 removing obstructions ;  
 After these, and more, it is just possible there comes to  
 a man, a woman, the divine power to use words.

<sup>4</sup> Then toward that man or that woman, swiftly hasten  
 all—None refuse, all attend ;  
 Armies, ships, antiquities, the dead, libraries, paintings,  
 machines, cities, hate, despair, amity, pain, theft,  
 murder, aspiration, form in close ranks ;

They debouch as they are wanted to march obediently  
through the mouth of that man, or that woman.

<sup>5</sup> . . . . O I see arise orators fit for inland America ;  
And I see it is as slow to become an orator as to be-  
come a man ;  
And I see that all power is folded in a great vocalism.

<sup>6</sup> Of a great vocalism, the merciless light thereof shall  
pour, and the storm rage,  
Every flash shall be a revelation, an insult,  
The glaring flame on depths, on heights, on suns, on  
stars,  
On the interior and exterior of man or woman,  
On the laws of Nature—on passive materials,  
On what you called death—(and what to you therefore  
was death,  
As far as there can be death.)



### SOLID, IRONICAL, ROLLING ORB.

SOLID, ironical, rolling orb !  
Master of all, and matter of fact !—at last I accept your  
terms ;  
Bringing to practical, vulgar tests, of all my ideal  
dreams,  
And of me, as lover and hero.

## BATHED IN WAR'S PERFUME.

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### BATHED IN WAR'S PERFUME.

BATHED in war's perfume—delicate flag!  
(Should the days needing armies, needing fleets, come  
again,)  
O to hear you call the sailors and the soldiers! flag like  
a beautiful woman!  
O to hear the tramp, tramp, of a million answering  
men! O the ships they arm with joy!  
O to see you leap and beckon from the tall masts of  
ships!  
O to see you peering down on the sailors on the decks!  
Flag like the eyes of women.

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### DELICATE CLUSTER.

DELICATE cluster! flag of teeming life!  
Covering all my lands! all my sea-shores lining!  
Flag of death! (how I watch'd you through the smoke  
of battle pressing!  
How I heard you flap and rustle, cloth defiant!)  
Flag cerulean! sunny flag! with the orbs of night dap-  
pled!  
Ah my silvery beauty! ah my woolly white and crim-  
son!  
Ah to sing the song of you, my matron mighty!  
My sacred one, my mother.



## SONG OF THE BANNER AT DAY-BREAK.

## POET.

<sup>1</sup> O A new song, a free song,  
 Flapping, flapping, flapping, flapping, by sounds, by  
       voices clearer,  
 By the wind's voice and that of the drum,  
 By the banner's voice, and child's voice, and sea's voice,  
       and father's voice,  
 Low on the ground and high in the air,  
 On the ground where father and child stand,  
 In the upward air where their eyes turn,  
 Where the banner at day-break is flapping.

<sup>2</sup> Words! book-words! what are you?  
 Words no more, for hearken and see,  
 My song is there in the open air—and I must sing,  
 With the banner and pennant a-flapping.

<sup>3</sup> I'll weave the chord and twine in,  
 Man's desire and babe's desire—I'll twine them in, I'll  
       put in life;  
 I'll put the bayonet's flashing point—I'll let bullets and  
       slugs whizz;  
 (As one carrying a symbol and menace, far into the  
       future,  
 Crying with trumpet voice, *Arouse and beware! Beware*  
       *and arouse!*)  
 I'll pour the verse with streams of blood, full of voli-  
       tion, full of joy;  
 Then loosen, launch forth, to go and compete,  
 With the banner and pennant a-flapping.

## PENNANT.

<sup>4</sup> Come up here, bard, bard;  
 Come up here, soul, soul;  
 Come up here, dear little child,  
 To fly in the clouds and winds with me, and play with  
       the measureless light.

## CHILD.

<sup>5</sup> Father, what is that in the sky beckoning to me with  
long finger?  
And what does it say to me all the while?

## FATHER.

<sup>6</sup> Nothing, my babe, you see in the sky ;  
And nothing at all to you it says. But look you, my  
babe,  
Look at these dazzling things in the houses, and see  
you the money-shops opening ;  
And see you the vehicles preparing to crawl along the  
streets with goods :  
These ! ah, these ! how valued and toil'd for, these !  
How envied by all the earth !

## POET.

<sup>7</sup> Fresh and rosy red, the sun is mounting high ;  
On floats the sea in distant blue, careering through its  
channels ;  
On floats the wind over the breast of the sea, setting in  
toward land ;  
The great steady wind from west and west-by-south,  
Floating so buoyant, with milk-white foam on the  
waters.

<sup>8</sup> But I am not the sea, nor the red sun ;  
I am not the wind, with girlish laughter ;  
Not the immense wind which strengthens—not the wind  
which lashes ;  
Not the spirit that ever lashes its own body to terror  
and death ;  
But I am that which unseen comes and sings, sings,  
sings,  
Which babbles in brooks and scoots in showers on the  
land,  
Which the birds know in the woods, mornings and  
evenings,

And the shore-sands know, and the hissing wave, and  
     that banner and pennant,  
 Aloft there flapping and flapping.

## CHILD.

<sup>9</sup> O father, it is alive—it is full of people—it has children!

O now it seems to me it is talking to its children!

I hear it—it talks to me—O it is wonderful!

O it stretches—it spreads and runs so fast! O my father,

It is so broad, it covers the whole sky!

## FATHER.

<sup>10</sup> Cease, cease, my foolish babe,

What you are saying is sorrowful to me—much it displeases me;

Behold with the rest, again I say—behold not banners and pennants aloft;

But the well-prepared pavements behold—and mark the solid-wall'd houses.

## BANNER AND PENNANT.

<sup>11</sup> Speak to the child, O bard, out of Manhattan;

(The war is over—yet never over . . . out of it, we are born to real life and identity;)

Speak to our children all, or north or south of Manhattan,

Where our factory-engines hum, where our miners delve the ground,

Where our hoarse Niagara rumbles, where our prairie-plows are plowing;

Speak, O bard! point this day, leaving all the rest, to us over all—and yet we know not why;

For what are we, mere strips of cloth, profiting nothing, Only flapping in the wind?

## POET.

<sup>12</sup> I hear and see not strips of cloth alone ;  
I hear again the tramp of armies, I hear the challenging  
sentry ;  
I hear the jubilant shouts of millions of men—I hear  
LIBERTY !  
I hear the drums beat, and the trumpets yet blowing ;  
I myself move abroad, swift-rising, flying then ;  
I use the wings of the land-bird, and use the wings of  
the sea-bird, and look down as from a height ;  
I do not deny the precious results of peace—I see pop-  
ulous cities, with wealth incalculable ;  
I see numberless farms—I see the farmers working in  
their fields or barns ;  
I see mechanics working—I see buildings everywhere  
founded, going up, or finish'd ;  
I see trains of cars swiftly speeding along railroad  
tracks, drawn by the locomotives ;  
I see the stores, depots, of Boston, Baltimore, Charles-  
ton, New Orleans ;  
I see far in the west the immense area of grain—I  
dwell awhile, hovering ;  
I pass to the lumber forests of the north, and again to  
the southern plantation, and again to California ;  
Sweeping the whole, I see the countless profit, the busy  
gatherings, earned wages ;  
See the identity formed out of thirty-eight spacious and  
haughty States, (and many more to come ;)   
See forts on the shores of harbors—see ships sailing in  
and out ;  
Then over all, (aye ! aye !) my little and lengthen'd  
pennant shaped like a sword,  
Runs swiftly up, indicating war and defiance—And now  
the halyards have rais'd it,  
Side of my banner broad and blue—side of my starry  
banner,  
Discarding peace over all the sea and land.

## BANNER AND PENNANT.

<sup>13</sup> Yet louder, higher, stronger, bard ! yet farther, wider  
cleave !

No longer let our children deem us riches and peace  
alone ;

We may be terror and carnage, and are so now ;

Not now are we any one of these spacious and haughty  
States, (nor any five, nor ten ;)

Nor market nor depot are we, nor money-bank in the  
city ;

But these, and all, and the brown and spreading land,  
and the mines below, are ours ;

And the shores of the sea are ours, and the rivers great  
and small ;

And the fields they moisten are ours, and the crops and  
the fruits are ours ;

Bays and channels, and ships sailing in and out, are  
ours—and we over all,

Over the area spread below, the three or four millions  
of square miles—the capitals,

The forty millions of people—O bard ! in life and death  
supreme,

We, even we, henceforth flaunt out masterful, high up  
above,

Not for the present alone, for a thousand years, chant-  
ing through you,

This song to the soul of one poor little child.

## CHILD.

<sup>14</sup> O my father, I like not the houses ;

They will never to me be anything—nor do I like  
money ;

But to mount up there I would like, O father dear—  
that banner I like ;

That pennant I would be, and must be.

## FATHER.

<sup>15</sup> Child of mine, you fill me with anguish ;

To be that pennant would be too fearful ;



Little you know what it is this day, and after this day,  
forever ;  
It is to gain nothing, but risk and defy everything ;  
Forward to stand in front of wars—and O, such wars !  
—what have you to do with them ?  
With passions of demons, slaughter, premature death ?

## POET.

<sup>16</sup> Demons and death then I sing ;  
Put in all, aye all, will I—sword-shaped pennant for  
war, and banner so broad and blue,  
And a pleasure new and extatic, and the prattled yearn-  
ing of children,  
Blent with the sounds of the peaceful land, and the  
liquid wash of the sea ;  
And the black ships, fighting on the sea, enveloped in  
smoke ;  
And the icy cool of the far, far north, with rustling  
cedars and pines ;  
And the whirr of drums, and the sound of soldiers  
marching, and the hot sun shining south ;  
And the beach-waves combing over the beach on my  
eastern shore, and my western shore the same ;  
And all between those shores, and my ever running  
Mississippi, with bends and chutes ;  
And my Illinois fields, and my Kansas fields, and my  
fields of Missouri ;  
The CONTINENT—devoting the whole identity, without  
reserving an atom,  
Pour in ! overwhelm that which asks, which sings, with all,  
and the yield of all.

## BANNER AND PENNANT.

<sup>17</sup> Aye all ! for ever, for all !  
From sea to sea, north and south, east and west,  
(The war is completed, the price is paid, the title is  
settled beyond recall ;)  
Fusing and holding, claiming, devouring the whole ;  
No more with tender lip, nor musical labial sound,

But, out of the night emerging for good, our voice per-  
suasive no more,  
Croaking like crows here in the wind.

POET.

(*Finale.*)

<sup>18</sup> My limbs, my veins dilate ;  
The blood of the world has fill'd me full—my theme is  
clear at last :  
—Banner so broad, advancing out of the night, I sing  
you haughty and resolute ;  
I burst through where I waited long, too long, deafen'd  
and blinded ;  
My sight, my hearing and tongue, are come to me, (a  
little child taught me ;)  
I hear from above, O pennant of war, your ironical call  
and demand ;  
Insensate ! insensate ! (yet I at any rate chant you,) O  
banner !  
Not houses of peace indeed are you, nor any nor all  
their prosperity, (if need be, you shall again  
have every one of those houses to destroy them ;  
You thought not to destroy those valuable houses,  
standing fast, full of comfort, built with money ;  
May they stand fast, then ? Not an hour, except you,  
above them and all, stand fast ;)  
—O banner ! not money so precious are you, not farm  
produce you, nor the material good nutriment,  
Nor excellent stores, nor landed on wharves from the  
ships ;  
Not the superb ships, with sail-power or steam-power,  
fetching and carrying cargoes,  
Nor machinery, vehicles, trade, nor revenues,—But  
you, as henceforth I see you,  
Running up out of the night, bringing your cluster of  
stars, (ever-enlarging stars ;)  
Divider of day-break you, cutting the air, touch'd by  
the sun, measuring the sky,  
(Passionately seen and yearn'd for by one poor little  
child,

While others remain busy, or smartly talking, forever  
 teaching thrift, thrift ;)   
 O you up there! O pennant! where you undulate like  
 a snake, hissing so curious,  
 Out of reach—an idea only—yet furiously fought for,  
 risking bloody death—loved by me!  
 So loved! O you banner leading the day, with stars  
 brought from the night!  
 Valueless, object of eyes, over all and demanding all—  
 (absolute owner of ALL)—O banner and pennant!  
 I too leave the rest—great as it is, it is nothing—houses,  
 machines are nothing—I see them not;  
 I see but you, O warlike pennant! O banner so broad,  
 with stripes, I sing you only,  
 Flapping up there in the wind.



## ETHIOPIA SALUTING THE COLORS.

(A Reminiscence of 1864.)

1

Who are you, dusky woman, so ancient, hardly human,  
 With your woolly-white and turban'd head, and bare  
 bony feet?  
 Why, rising by the roadside here, do you the colors  
 greet?

2

('Tis while our army lines Carolina's sand and pines,  
 Forth from thy hovel door, thou, Ethiopia, com'st to me,  
 As, under doughty Sherman, I march toward the sea.)

3

*Me, master, years a hundred, since from my parents sun-  
 der'd,  
 A little child, they caught me as the savage beast is caught;  
 Then hither me, across the sea, the cruel slaver brought.*

4

No further does she say, but lingering all the day,  
 Her high-borne turban'd head she wags, and rolls her  
     darkling eye,  
 And curtseys to the regiments, the guidons moving by.

5

What is it, fateful woman—so blear, hardly human?  
 Why wag your head, with turban bound—yellow, red  
     and green? .  
 Are the things so strange and marvelous, you see or  
     have seen?



### Lo! Victress on the Peaks!

Lo! Victress on the peaks!  
 Where thou, with mighty brow, regarding the world,  
 (The world, O Libertad, that vainly conspired against  
     thee ;)  
 Out of its countless, beleaguering toils, after thwarting  
     them all ;  
 Dominant, with the dazzling sun around thee,  
 Flauntest now unharm'd, in immortal soundness and  
     bloom—lo! in these hours supreme,  
 No poem proud, I, chanting, bring to thee—nor mas-  
     tery's rapturous verse ;  
 But a book, containing night's darkness, and blood-  
     dripping wounds,  
 And psalms of the dead.



### World, Take Good Notice.

WORLD, take good notice, silver stars fading,  
 Milky hue ript, weft of white detaching,  
 Coals thirty-eight, baleful and burning,  
 Scarlet, significant, hands off warning,  
 Now and henceforth flaunt from these shores.

## Thick-Sprinkled Bunting.

THICK-SPRINKLED bunting! Flag of stars!  
Long yet your road, fateful flag!—long yet your road,  
and lined with bloody death!  
For the prize I see at issue, at last is the world!  
All its ships and shores I see, interwoven with your  
threads, greedy banner!  
—Dream'd again the flags of kings, highest borne, to  
flaunt unrival'd?  
O hasten, flag of man! O with sure and steady step,  
passing highest flags of kings,  
Walk supreme to the heavens, mighty symbol—run up  
above them all,  
Flag of stars! thick-sprinkled bunting!



## A HAND-MIRROR.

HOLD it up sternly! See this it sends back! (Who is it?  
 Is it you?)  
 Outside fair costume—within ashes and filth,  
 No more a flashing eye—no more a sonorous voice or  
 springy step;  
 Now some slave's eye, voice, hands, step,  
 A drunkard's breath, unwholesome eater's face, vene-  
 ree's flesh,  
 Lungs rotting away piecemeal, stomach sour and can-  
 kerous,  
 Joints rheumatic, bowels clogged with abomination,  
 Blood circulating dark and poisonous streams,  
 Words babble, hearing and touch callous,  
 No brain, no heart left—no magnetism of sex;  
 Such, from one look in this looking-glass ere you go  
 hence,  
 Such a result so soon—and from such a beginning!

---

 Germs.

FORMS, qualities, lives, humanity, language, thoughts,  
 The ones known, and the ones unknown—the ones on  
 the stars,  
 The stars themselves, some shaped, others unshaped,  
 Wonders as of those countries—the soil, trees, cities,  
 inhabitants, whatever they may be,  
 Splendid suns, the moons and rings, the countless com-  
 binations and effects;  
 Such-like, and as good as such-like, visible here or any-  
 where, stand provided for in a handful of space,  
 which I extend my arm and half enclose with my  
 hand;  
 That contains the start of each and all—the virtue, the  
 germs of all.

## LEAVES OF GRASS.

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### O ME! O LIFE!

O ME! O life! . . . of the questions of these recurring ;  
Of the endless trains of the faithless—of cities fill'd with  
the foolish ;  
Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more  
foolish than I, and who more faithless?)  
Of eyes that vainly crave the light—of the objects mean  
—of the struggle ever renew'd ;  
Of the poor results of all—of the plodding and sordid  
crowds I see around me ;  
Of the empty and useless years of the rest—with the  
rest me intertwined ;  
• The question, O me! so sad, recurring—What good  
amid these, O me, O life ?

### *Answer.*

That you are here—that life exists, and identity ;  
That the powerful play goes on, and you will contribute  
a verse.

---

### THOUGHTS.

OF Public Opinion ;  
Of a calm and cool fiat, sooner or later, (How impassive!  
How certain and final !)  
Of the President with pale face, asking secretly to himself,  
*What will the people say at last ?*

Of the frivolous Judge—Of the corrupt Congressman,  
Governor, Mayor—Of such as these, standing  
helpless and exposed ;  
Of the mumbling and screaming priest—(soon, soon  
deserted ;)   
Of the lessening, year by year, of venerableness, and of  
the dicta of officers, statutes, pulpits, schools ;  
Of the rising forever taller and stronger and broader,  
of the intuitions of men and women, and of self-  
esteem, and of personality ;  
—Of the New World—Of the Democracies, resplendent,  
en-masse ;  
Of the conformity of politics, armies, navies, to them  
and to me,  
Of the shining sun by them—Of the inherent light,  
greater than the rest,  
Of the envelopment of all by them, and of the effusion  
of all from them.



## BEGINNERS.

How they are provided for upon the earth, (appearing  
at intervals ;)   
How dear and dreadful they are to the earth ;  
How they inure to themselves as much as to any—  
What a paradox appears, their age ;  
How people respond to them, yet know them not ;  
How there is something relentless in their fate, all  
times ;  
How all times mischoose the objects of their adulation  
and reward,  
And how the same inexorable price must still be paid  
for the same great purchase.

## SONGS OF INSURRECTION.



STILL THOUGH THE ONE I SING.

STILL, though the one I sing,  
(One, yet of contradictions made,) I dedicate to Nation-  
ality,  
I leave in him Revolt, (O latent right of insurrection ! O  
quenchless, indispensable fire !)



TO A FOIL'D EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONAIRE.

1

<sup>1</sup> COURAGE yet ! my brother or my sister !  
Keep on ! Liberty is to be subserv'd, whatever occurs ;  
That is nothing, that is quell'd by one or two failures,  
or any number of failures,  
Or by the indifference or ingratitude of the people, or  
by any unfaithfulness,  
Or the show of the tushes of power, soldiers, cannon,  
penal statutes.

<sup>2</sup> Revolt ! and still revolt ! revolt !

What we believe in waits latent forever through all  
the continents, and all the islands and archi-  
pelagos of the sea ;

What we believe in invites no one, promises nothing,  
sits in calmness and light, is positive and com-  
posed, knows no discouragement,

Waiting patiently, waiting its time.

<sup>3</sup> (Not songs of loyalty alone are these,

But songs of insurrection also ;

For I am the sworn poet of every dauntless rebel, the  
world over,

And he going with me leaves peace and routine behind  
him,

And stakes his life, to be lost at any moment.)

## 2

<sup>4</sup> Revolt ! and the downfall of tyrants !

The battle rages with many a loud alarm, and frequent  
advance and retreat,

The infidel triumphs—or supposes he triumphs,

Then the prison, scaffold, garrote, hand-cuffs, iron neck-  
lace and anklet, lead-balls, do their work,

The named and unnamed heroes pass to other spheres,  
The great speakers and writers are exiled—they lie sick  
in distant lands,

The cause is asleep—the strongest throats are still,  
choked with their own blood,

The young men droop their eyelashes toward the ground  
when they meet ;

—But for all this, liberty has not gone out of the place,  
nor the infidel enter'd into full possession.

<sup>5</sup> When liberty goes out of a place, it is not the first to  
go, nor the second or third to go,  
It waits for all the rest to go—it is the last.

<sup>6</sup> When there are no more memories of heroes and  
martyrs,



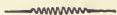
And when all life, and all the souls of men and women  
 are discharged from any part of the earth,  
 Then only shall liberty, or the idea of liberty, be discharged  
 from that part of the earth,  
 And the infidel come into full possession.

## 3

<sup>7</sup> Then courage ! European revolter ! revoltress !  
 For, till all ceases, neither must you cease.

<sup>8</sup> I do not know what you are for, (I do not know what  
 I am for myself, nor what anything is for,)  
 But I will search carefully for it even in being foil'd,  
 In defeat, poverty, misconception, imprisonment—for  
 they too are great.

<sup>9</sup> Revolt ! and the bullet for tyrants !  
 Did we think victory great ?  
 So it is—But now it seems to me, when it cannot be  
 help'd, that defeat is great,  
 And that death and dismay are great.



## FRANCE,

The 18th Year of These States.

## 1

<sup>1</sup> A GREAT year and place ;  
 A harsh, discordant, natal scream out-sounding, to  
 touch the mother's heart closer than any yet.

<sup>2</sup> I walk'd the shores of my Eastern Sea,  
 Heard over the waves the little voice,  
 Saw the divine infant, where she woke, mournfully wailing,  
 amid the roar of cannon, curses, shouts,  
 crash of falling buildings ;

Was not so sick from the blood in the gutters running  
 —nor from the single corpses, nor those in heaps,  
 nor those borne away in the tumbrils ;  
 Was not so desperate at the battues of death—was not  
 so shock'd at the repeated fusillades of the guns.

## 2

<sup>3</sup> Pale, silent, stern, what could I say to that long-  
 accrued retribution ?  
 Could I wish humanity different ?  
 Could I wish the people made of wood and stone ?  
 Or that there be no justice in destiny or time ?

## 3

<sup>4</sup> O Liberty ! O mate for me !  
 Here too the blaze, the grape-shot and the axe, in re-  
 serve, to fetch them out in case of need ;  
 Here too, though long repress, can never be destroy'd ;  
 Here too could rise at last, murdering and extatic ;  
 Here too demanding full arrears of vengeance.

## 4

<sup>5</sup> Hence I sign this salute over the sea,  
 And I do not deny that terrible red birth and baptism,  
 But remember the little voice that I heard wailing—and  
 wait with perfect trust, no matter how long ;  
 And from to-day, sad and cogent, I maintain the be-  
 queath'd cause, as for all lands,  
 And I send these words to Paris with my love,  
 And I guess some chansonniers there will understand  
 them,  
 For I guess there is latent music yet in France—floods  
 of it ;  
 O I hear already the bustle of instruments—they will  
 soon be drowning all that would interrupt them ;  
 O I think the east wind brings a triumphal and free  
 march,  
 It reaches hither—it swells me to joyful madness,  
 I will run transpose it in words, to justify it,  
 I will yet sing a song for you, MA FEMME.

## EUROPE,

The 72d and 73d Years of These States.

## 1

<sup>1</sup> SUDDENLY, out of its stale and drowsy lair, the lair of  
slaves,  
Like lightning it le'pt forth, half startled at itself,  
Its feet upon the ashes and the rags—its hands tight to  
the throats of kings.

<sup>2</sup> O hope and faith !  
O aching close of exiled patriots' lives !  
O many a sicken'd heart !  
Turn back unto this day, and make yourselves afresh.

<sup>3</sup> And you, paid to defile the People ! you liars, mark !  
Not for numberless agonies, murders, lusts,  
For court thieving in its manifold mean forms, worming  
from his simplicity the poor man's wages,  
For many a promise sworn by royal lips, and broken,  
and laugh'd at in the breaking,  
Then in their power, not for all these, did the blows  
strike revenge, or the heads of the nobles fall ;  
The People scorn'd the ferocity of kings.

## 2

<sup>4</sup> But the sweetness of mercy brew'd bitter destruction,  
and the frighten'd monarchs come back ;  
Each comes in state, with his train—hangman, priest,  
tax-gatherer,  
Soldier, lawyer, lord, jailer, and sycophant.

<sup>5</sup> Yet behind all, lowering, stealing—lo, a Shape,  
Vague as the night, draped interminably, head, front  
and form, in scarlet folds,  
Whose face and eyes none may see,

Out of its robes only this—the red robes, lifted by the  
arm,  
One finger, crook'd, pointed high over the top, like the  
head of a snake appears.

## 3

<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, corpses lie in new-made graves—bloody  
corpses of young men ;  
The rope of the gibbet hangs heavily, the bullets of  
princes are flying, the creatures of power laugh  
aloud,  
And all these things bear fruits—and they are good.

<sup>7</sup> Those corpses of young men,  
Those martyrs that hang from the gibbets—those hearts  
pierc'd by the gray lead,  
Cold and motionless as they seem, live elsewhere with  
unslaughter'd vitality.

<sup>8</sup> They live in other young men, O kings !  
They live in brothers, again ready to defy you !  
They were purified by death—they were taught and  
exalted.

<sup>9</sup> Not a grave of the murder'd for freedom, but grows  
seed for freedom, in its turn to bear seed,  
Which the winds carry afar and re-sow, and the rains  
and the snows nourish.

<sup>10</sup> Not a disembodied spirit can the weapons of tyrants  
let loose,  
But it stalks invisibly over the earth, whispering, coun-  
seling, cautioning.

## 4

<sup>11</sup> Liberty ! let others despair of you ! I never despair  
of you.

<sup>12</sup> Is the house shut ? Is the master away ?  
Nevertheless, be ready—be not weary of watching ;  
He will soon return—his messengers come anon.

## Walt Whitman's Caution.

To The States, or any one of them, or any city of The  
States, *Resist much, obey little* ;  
Once unquestioning obedience, once fully enslaved ;  
Once fully enslaved, no nation, state, city, of this earth,  
ever afterward resumes its liberty.

---

## To a Certain Cantatrice.

HERE, take this gift !  
I was reserving it for some hero, speaker, or General,  
One who should serve the good old cause, the great  
Idea, the progress and freedom of the race ;  
Some brave confronter of despots—some daring rebel ;  
—But I see that what I was reserving, belongs to you  
just as much as to any.



# LEAVES OF GRASS.

---

## To You.

<sup>1</sup> WHOEVER you are, I fear you are walking the walks of dreams,

I fear these supposed realities are to melt from under your feet and hands ;

Even now, your features, joys, speech, house, trade, manners, troubles, follies, costume, crimes, dissipate away from you,

Your true Soul and Body appear before me,

They stand forth out of affairs—out of commerce, shops, law, science, work, farms, clothes, the house, medicine, print, buying, selling, eating, drinking, suffering, dying.

<sup>2</sup> Whoever you are, now I place my hand upon you, that you be my poem ;

I whisper with my lips close to your ear,

I have loved many women and men, but I love none better than you.

<sup>3</sup> O I have been dilatory and dumb ;

I should have made my way straight to you long ago ;

I should have blabb'd nothing but you, I should have chanted nothing but you.

<sup>4</sup> I will leave all, and come and make the hymns of you ;

None have understood you, but I understand you ;

None have done justice to you—you have not done justice to yourself ;

None but have found you imperfect—I only find no imperfection in you ;

None but would subordinate you—I only am he who  
will never consent to subordinate you ;  
I only am he who places over you no master, owner,  
better, God, beyond what waits intrinsically in  
yourself.

<sup>5</sup> Painters have painted their swarming groups, and the  
centre figure of all ;  
From the head of the centre figure spreading a nimbus  
of gold-color'd light ;  
But I paint myriads of heads, but paint no head with-  
out its nimbus of gold-color'd light ;  
From my hand, from the brain of every man and woman  
it streams, effulgently flowing forever.

<sup>6</sup> O I could sing such grandeurs and glories about you !  
You have not known what you are—you have slumber'd  
upon yourself all your life ;  
Your eye-lids have been the same as closed most of the  
time ;  
What you have done returns already in mockeries ;  
(Your thrift, knowledge, prayers, if they do not return  
in mockeries, what is their return ?)

<sup>7</sup> The mockeries are not you ;  
Underneath them, and within them, I see you lurk ;  
I pursue you where none else has pursued you ;  
Silence, the desk, the flippant expression, the night, the  
accustom'd routine, if these conceal you from  
others, or from yourself, they do not conceal you  
from me ;  
The shaved face, the unsteady eye, the impure com-  
plexion, if these balk others, they do not balk  
me,  
The pert apparel, the deform'd attitude, drunkenness,  
greed, premature death, all these I part aside.

<sup>8</sup> There is no endowment in man or woman that is not  
tallied in you ;  
There is no virtue, no beauty, in man or woman, but as  
good is in you ;

No pluck, no endurance in others, but as good is in you ;

No pleasure waiting for others, but an equal pleasure waits for you.

<sup>9</sup> As for me, I give nothing to any one, except I give the like carefully to you ;

I sing the songs of the glory of none, not God, sooner than I sing the songs of the glory of you.

<sup>10</sup> Whoever you are ! claim your own at any hazard !

These shows of the east and west are tame, compared to you ;

These immense meadows—these interminable rivers—you are immense and interminable as they ;

These furies, elements, storms, motions of Nature, throes of apparent dissolution—you are he or she who is master or mistress over them,

Master or mistress in your own right over Nature, elements, pain, passion, dissolution.

<sup>11</sup> The hobbles fall from your ankles—you find an unfailing sufficiency ;

Old or young, male or female, rude, low, rejected by the rest, whatever you are promulges itself ;

Through birth, life, death, burial, the means are provided, nothing is scant ;

Through angers, losses, ambition, ignorance, ennui, what you are picks its way.

## SONGS OF PARTING.

---

### AS THE TIME DRAWS NIGH.

#### 1

<sup>1</sup> As the time draws nigh, glooming, a cloud,  
A dread beyond, of I know not what, darkens me.

<sup>2</sup> I shall go forth,  
I shall traverse The States awhile—but I cannot tell  
whither or how long ;  
Perhaps soon, some day or night while I am singing,  
my voice will suddenly cease.

#### 2

<sup>3</sup> O book, O chants ! must all then amount to but this ?  
Must we barely arrive at this beginning of us ? . . .  
And yet it is enough, O soul !  
O soul ! we have positively appear'd—that is enough.

---

### YEARS OF THE MODERN.

YEARS of the modern ! years of the unperform'd !  
Your horizon rises—I see it parting away for more  
august dramas ;  
I see not America only—I see not only Liberty's nation,  
but other nations preparing ;

I see tremendous entrances and exits—I see new combinations—I see the solidarity of races ;  
I see that force advancing with irresistible power on the world's stage ;  
(Have the old forces, the old wars, played their parts ? are the acts suitable to them closed ?)  
I see Freedom, completely arm'd, and victorious, and very haughty, with Law on one side, and Peace on the other,  
A stupendous Trio, all issuing forth against the idea of caste ;  
—What historic denouements are these we so rapidly approach ?  
I see men marching and countermarching by swift millions ;  
I see the frontiers and boundaries of the old aristocracies broken ;  
I see the landmarks of European kings removed ;  
I see this day the People beginning their landmarks, (all others give way ;)  
—Never were such sharp questions ask'd as this day ;  
Never was average man, his soul, more energetic, more like a God ;  
Lo ! how he urges and urges, leaving the masses no rest ;  
His daring foot is on land and sea everywhere—he colonizes the Pacific, the archipelagoes ;  
With the steam-ship, the electric telegraph, the newspaper, the wholesale engines of war,  
With these, and the world-spreading factories, he interlinks all geography, all lands ;  
—What whispers are these, O lands, running ahead of you, passing under the seas ?  
Are all nations communing ? is there going to be but one heart to the globe ?  
Is humanity forming, en-masse ?—for lo ! tyrants tremble, crowns grow dim ;  
The earth, restive, confronts a new era, perhaps a general divine war ;  
No one knows what will happen next—such portents fill the days and nights ;



Years prophetic! the space ahead as I walk, as I vainly try to pierce it, is full of phantoms;  
 Unborn deeds, things soon to be, project their shapes around me;  
 This incredible rush and heat—this strange extatic fever of dreams, O years!  
 Your dreams, O years, how they penetrate through me!  
 (I know not whether I sleep or wake!)  
 The perform'd America and Europe grow dim, retiring in shadow behind me,  
 The unperform'd, more gigantic than ever, advance, advance upon me.

---

## THOUGHTS.

### 1

OF these years I sing,  
 How they pass and have pass'd, through convuls'd pains, as through parturitions;  
 How America illustrates birth, muscular youth, the promise, the sure fulfillment, the Absolute Success, despite of people—Illustrates evil as well as good;  
 How many hold despairingly yet to the models departed, caste, myths, obedience, compulsion, and to infidelity;  
 How few see the arrived models, the Athletes, the Western States—or see freedom or spirituality—or hold any faith in results,  
 (But I see the Athletes—and I see the results of the war glorious and inevitable—and they again leading to other results;)  
 How the great cities appear—How the Democratic masses, turbulent, wilful, as I love them;  
 How the whirl, the contest, the wrestle of evil with good, the sounding and resounding, keep on and on;

How society waits uniform'd, and is for a while between  
things ended and things begun ;  
How America is the continent of glories, and of the  
triumph of freedom, and of the Democracies,  
and of the fruits of society, and of all that is  
begun ;  
And how The States are complete in themselves—And  
how all triumphs and glories are complete in  
themselves, to lead onward,  
And how these of mine, and of The States, will in their  
turn be convuls'd, and serve other parturitions  
and transitions,  
And how all people, sights, combinations, the Demo-  
cratic masses, too, serve—and how every fact,  
and war itself, with all its horrors, serves,  
And how now, or at any time, each serves the exquisite  
transition of death.

## 2

OF seeds dropping into the ground—of birth,  
Of the steady concentration of America, inland, upward,  
to impregnable and swarming places,  
Of what Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio and the rest, are to be,  
Of what a few years will show there in Nebraska, Col-  
orado, Nevada, and the rest ;  
(Or afar, mounting the Northern Pacific to Sitka or  
Aliaska ;)  
Of what the feuillage of America is the preparation for  
—and of what all sights, North, South, East and  
West, are ;  
Of This Union, soak'd, welded in blood—of the solemn  
price paid—of the unnamed lost, ever present in  
my mind ;  
—Of the temporary use of materials, for identity's sake,  
Of the present, passing, departing—of the growth of  
completer men than any yet,  
Of myself, soon, perhaps, closing up my songs by these  
shores,  
Of California, of Oregon—and of me journeying to live  
and sing there ;

Of the Western Sea—of the spread inland between it  
and the spinal river,  
Of the great pastoral area, athletic and feminine,  
Of all sloping down there where the fresh free giver,  
the mother, the Mississippi flows,  
Of future women there—of happiness in those high  
plateaus, ranging three thousand miles, warm  
and cold ;  
Of mighty inland cities yet unsurvey'd and unsus-  
pected, (as I am also, and as it must be ;) )  
Of the new and good names—of the modern develop-  
ments—of inalienable homesteads ;  
Of a free and original life there—of simple diet and  
clean and sweet blood ;  
Of liveness, majestic faces, clear eyes, and perfect  
physique there ;  
Of immense spiritual results, future years, far west,  
each side of the Anahuacs ;  
Of these leaves, well understood there, (being made for  
that area ;) )  
Of the native scorn of grossness and gain there ;  
(O it lurks in me night and day—What is gain, after  
all, to savageness and freedom ?)

---

## Song at Sunset.

<sup>1</sup> SPLENDOR of ended day, floating and filling me !  
Hour prophetic—hour resuming the past !  
Inflating my throat—you, divine average !  
You, Earth and Life, till the last ray gleams, I sing.

<sup>2</sup> Open mouth of my Soul, uttering gladness,  
Eyes of my Soul, seeing perfection,  
Natural life of me, faithfully praising things ;  
Corroborating forever the triumph of things.

<sup>3</sup> Illustrious every one!

Illustrious what we name space—sphere of unnumber'd spirits ;

Illustrious the mystery of motion, in all beings, even the tiniest insect ;

Illustrious the attribute of speech—the senses—the body ;

Illustrious the passing light! Illustrious the pale reflection on the new moon in the western sky!

Illustrious whatever I see, or hear, or touch, to the last.

<sup>4</sup> Good in all,

In the satisfaction and aplomb of animals,

In the annual return of the seasons,

In the hilarity of youth,

In the strength and flush of manhood,

In the grandeur and exquisiteness of old age,

In the superb vistas of Death.

<sup>5</sup> Wonderful to depart ;

Wonderful to be here!

The heart, to jet the all-alike and innocent blood!

To breathe the air, how delicious!

To speak! to walk! to seize something by the hand!

To prepare for sleep, for bed—to look on my rose-color'd flesh ;

To be conscious of my body, so satisfied, so large ;

To be this incredible God I am ;

To have gone forth among other Gods—these men and women I love.

<sup>6</sup> Wonderful how I celebrate you and myself!

How my thoughts play subtly at the spectacles around!

How the clouds pass silently overhead!

How the earth darts on and on! and how the sun, moon, stars, dart on and on!

How the water sports and sings! (Surely it is alive!)

How the trees rise and stand up—with strong trunks—with branches and leaves!

(Surely there is something more in each of the trees—some living Soul.)

<sup>7</sup> O amazement of things ! even the least particle !  
O spirituality of things !  
O strain musical, flowing through ages and continents  
—now reaching me and America !  
I take your strong chords—I intersperse them, and  
cheerfully pass them forward.

<sup>8</sup> I too carol the sun, usher'd; or at noon, or, as now,  
setting,  
I too throb to the brain and beauty of the earth, and  
of all the growths of the earth,  
I too have felt the resistless call of myself.

<sup>9</sup> As I sail'd down the Mississippi,  
As I wander'd over the prairies,  
As I have lived—As I have look'd through my windows,  
my eyes,  
As I went forth in the morning—As I beheld the light  
breaking in the east ;  
As I bathed on the beach of the Eastern Sea, and again  
on the beach of the Western Sea ;  
As I roam'd the streets of inland Chicago—whatever  
streets I have roam'd ;  
Or cities, or silent woods, or peace, or even amid the  
sights of war ;  
Wherever I have been, I have charged myself with con-  
tentment and triumph.

<sup>10</sup> I sing the Equalities, modern or old,  
I sing the endless finales of things ;  
I say Nature continues—Glory continues ;  
I praise with electric voice ;  
For I do not see one imperfection in the universe ;  
And I do not see one cause or result lamentable at last  
in the universe.

<sup>11</sup> O setting sun ! though the time has come,  
I still warble under you, if none else does, unmitigated  
adoration.



## WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER.

WHEN I heard the learn'd astronomer ;  
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns  
before me ;  
When I was shown the charts and the diagrams, to add,  
divide, and measure them ;  
When I, sitting, heard the astronomer, where he lec-  
tured with much applause in the lecture-room,  
How soon, unaccountable, I became tired and sick ;  
Till rising and gliding out, I wander'd off by myself,  
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,  
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

---

## TO RICH GIVERS.

WHAT you give me, I cheerfully accept,  
A little sustenance, a hut and garden, a little money—  
these, as I rendezvous with my poems ;  
A traveler's lodging and breakfast as I journey through  
The States—Why should I be ashamed to own  
such gifts ? Why to advertise for them ?  
For I myself am not one who bestows nothing upon  
man and woman ;  
For I bestow upon any man or woman the entrance to  
all the gifts of the universe.

---

## THOUGHT.

OF what I write from myself—As if that were not the  
resumé ;  
Of Histories—As if such, however complete, were not  
less complete than the preceding poems ;  
As if those shreds, the records of nations, could possibly  
be as lasting as the preceding poems ;  
As if here were not the amount of all nations, and of all  
the lives of heroes.

## SO LONG!

## 1

<sup>1</sup> To conclude—I announce what comes after me ;  
I announce mightier offspring, orators, days, and then,  
for the present, depart.

<sup>2</sup> I remember I said, before my leaves sprang at all,  
I would raise my voice jocund and strong, with reference  
to consummations.

<sup>3</sup> When America does what was promis'd,  
When there are plentiful athletic bards, inland and  
seaboard,  
When through These States walk a hundred millions of  
superb persons,  
When the rest part away for superb persons, and con-  
tribute to them,  
When breeds of the most perfect mothers denote  
America,  
Then to me and mine our due fruition.

<sup>4</sup> I have press'd through in my own right,  
I have sung the Body and the Soul—War and Peace  
have I sung,  
And the songs of Life and of Birth—and shown that  
there are many births :  
I have offer'd my style to every one—I have journey'd  
with confident step ;  
While my pleasure is yet at the full, I whisper, *So long !*  
And take the young woman's hand, and the young  
man's hand, for the last time.

## 2

<sup>5</sup> I announce natural persons to arise ;  
I announce justice triumphant ;

I announce uncompromising liberty and equality ;  
I announce the justification of candor, and the justification of pride.

<sup>6</sup> I announce that the identity of These States is a single identity only ;  
I announce the Union more and more compact, indissoluble ;  
I announce splendors and majesties to make all the previous politics of the earth insignificant.

<sup>7</sup> I announce adhesiveness—I say it shall be limitless, unloosen'd ;  
I say you shall yet find the friend you were looking for.

<sup>8</sup> I announce a man or woman coming—perhaps you are the one, (*So long !*)  
I announce the great individual, fluid as Nature, chaste, affectionate, compassionate, fully armed.

<sup>9</sup> I announce a life that shall be copious, vehement, spiritual, bold ;  
I announce an end that shall lightly and joyfully meet its translation ;  
I announce myriads of youths, beautiful, gigantic, sweet-blooded ;  
I announce a race of splendid and savage old men.

## 3

<sup>10</sup> O thicker and faster ! (*So long !*)  
O crowding too close upon me ;  
I foresee too much—it means more than I thought ;  
It appears to me I am dying.

<sup>11</sup> Hasten throat, and sound your last !  
Salute me—salute the days once more. Peal the old cry once more.

<sup>12</sup> Screaming electric, the atmosphere using,  
At random glancing, each as I notice absorbing,

Swiftly on, but a little while alighting,  
 Curious envelop'd messages delivering,  
 Sparkles hot, seed ethereal, down in the dirt dropping,  
 Myself unknowing, my commission obeying, to question  
     it never daring,  
 To ages, and ages yet, the growth of the seed leaving,  
 To troops out of me, out of the army, the war arising—  
     they the tasks I have set promulging,  
 To women certain whispers of myself bequeathing—  
     their affection me more clearly explaining,  
 To young men my problems offering—no dallier I—I  
     the muscle of their brains trying,  
 So I pass—a little time vocal, visible, contrary ;  
 Afterward, a melodious echo, passionately bent for—  
     (death making me really undying ;) •  
 The best of me then when no longer visible—for toward  
     that I have been incessantly preparing.

<sup>13</sup> What is there more, that I lag and pause, and crouch  
     extended with unshut mouth ?  
 Is there a single final farewell ?

## 4

<sup>14</sup> My songs cease—I abandon them ;  
 From behind the screen where I hid, I advance personally,  
     solely to you.

<sup>15</sup> Camerado ! This is no book ;  
 Who touches this, touches a man ;  
 (Is it night ? Are we here alone ?)  
 It is I you hold, and who holds you ;  
 I spring from the pages into your arms—decease calls  
     me forth.

<sup>16</sup> O how your fingers drowse me !  
 Your breath falls around me like dew—your pulse lulls  
     the tympan of my ears ;  
 I feel immersed from head to foot ;  
 Delicious—enough.

<sup>17</sup> Enough, O deed impromptu and secret !  
Enough, O gliding present ! Enough, O summ'd-up  
past !

## 5

<sup>18</sup> Dear friend, whoever you are, take this kiss,  
I give it especially to you—Do not forget me ;  
I feel like one who has done work for the day, to retire  
awhile ;  
I receive now again of my many translations—from my  
avataras ascending—while others doubtless await  
me ;  
An unknown sphere, more real than I dream'd, more  
direct, darts awakening rays about me—*So long !*  
Remember my words—I may again return,  
I love you—I depart from materials ;  
I am as one disembodied, triumphant, dead.



LEAVES OF GRASS.

PASSAGE

to

INDIA.

*Gliding o'er all, through all,  
Through Nature, Time, and Space,  
As a Ship on the waters advancing,  
The Voyage of the Soul—not Life alone,  
Death—many Deaths, I sing.*

Washington, D. C.

1872.

*Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1870, by*  
*WALT WHITMAN,*  
*In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.*

Electrotyped by SMITH & McDUGAL, 82 Beekman Street, New York.

## CONTENTS.

|                                                            | PAGE |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Passage to India .....                                     | 5    |
| Thought. ....                                              | 16   |
| O Living Always—Always Dying.....                          | 16   |
| Proud Music of The Storm.....                              | 17   |
| <b>ASHES OF SOLDIERS.</b>                                  |      |
| Ashes of Soldiers.....                                     | 25   |
| In Midnight Sleep.....                                     | 27   |
| Camps of Green.....                                        | 28   |
| To a Certain Civilian.....                                 | 29   |
| Pensive on Her Dead Gazing, I Heard the Mother of All..... | 29   |
| <b>PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S BURIAL HYMN.</b>                    |      |
| When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom'd.....             | 31   |
| O Captain! My Captain!.....                                | 41   |
| Hush'd be the Camps To-day.....                            | 42   |
| This Dust was Once the Man.....                            | 42   |
| Poem of Joys.....                                          | 43   |
| To Think of Time.....                                      | 53   |
| Chanting the Square Deific.....                            | 60   |
| <b>WHISPERS OF HEAVENLY DEATH.</b>                         |      |
| Whispers of Heavenly Death.....                            | 63   |
| Darest Thou Now, O Soul.....                               | 64   |
| Of Him I Love Day and Night.....                           | 64   |
| Assurances.....                                            | 65   |
| Yet, Yet, Ye Downcast Hours.....                           | 66   |
| Quicksand Years.....                                       | 67   |
| That Music Always Round Me.....                            | 67   |
| As if a Phantom Caress'd Me.....                           | 68   |
| Here, Sailor.....                                          | 68   |
| A Noiseless Patient Spider.....                            | 69   |
| The Last Invocation.....                                   | 69   |
| As I Watch'd the Ploughman Ploughing.....                  | 70   |
| Pensive and Faltering.....                                 | 70   |
| <b>SEA-SHORE MEMORIES.</b>                                 |      |
| Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking.....                   | 71   |
| Elemental Drifts.....                                      | 78   |
| Tears.....                                                 | 82   |
| Aboard at a Ship's Helm.....                               | 82   |
| On the Beach at Night.....                                 | 83   |
| The World Below the Brine.....                             | 84   |
| On the Beach at Night, Alone.....                          | 85   |

| LEAVES OF GRASS.                        | PAGE |
|-----------------------------------------|------|
| A Carol of Harvest for 1867.....        | 87   |
| The Singer in the Prison.....           | 94   |
| Warble for Lilac-Time.....              | 96   |
| Who Learns My Lesson Complete?.....     | 98   |
| Thought.....                            | 99   |
| Myself and Mine.....                    | 100  |
| To Old Age.....                         | 101  |
| Miracles.....                           | 102  |
| Sparkles from The Wheel.....            | 103  |
| Excelsior.....                          | 104  |
| Mediums.....                            | 105  |
| Kosmos.....                             | 106  |
| To a Pupil.....                         | 106  |
| What am I, After All?.....              | 107  |
| Others may Praise what They Like.....   | 107  |
| Brother of All, with Generous Hand..... | 108  |
| Night on The Prairies.....              | 111  |
| On Journeys Through The States.....     | 112  |
| Savantism.....                          | 113  |
| Locations and Times.....                | 113  |
| Thought.....                            | 113  |
| Offerings.....                          | 113  |
| Tests.....                              | 114  |
| The Torch.....                          | 114  |
| Gods.....                               | 115  |
| To One Shortly to Die.....              | 116  |
| <b>NOW FINALE TO THE SHORE.</b>         |      |
| Now Finale to the Shore.....            | 117  |
| Shut Not Your Doors, &c.....            | 117  |
| Thought.....                            | 118  |
| The Untold Want.....                    | 118  |
| Portals.....                            | 119  |
| These Carols.....                       | 119  |
| This Day, O Soul.....                   | 119  |
| What Place is Besieged?.....            | 119  |
| To the Reader, at Parting.....          | 120  |
| Joy, Shipmate, Joy!.....                | 120  |

## PASSAGE TO INDIA.

---

### 1

<sup>1</sup> SINGING my days,  
Singing the great achievements of the present,  
Singing the strong, light works of engineers,  
Our modern wonders, (the antique ponderous Seven  
outvied,)

In the Old World, the east, the Suez canal,  
The New by its mighty railroad spann'd,  
The seas inlaid with eloquent, gentle wires,  
I sound, to commence, the cry, with thee, O soul,  
The Past! the Past! the Past!

<sup>2</sup> The Past! the dark, unfathom'd retrospect!  
The teeming gulf! the sleepers and the shadows!  
The past! the infinite greatness of the past!  
For what is the present, after all, but a growth out of  
the past?

(As a projectile, form'd, impell'd, passing a certain line,  
still keeps on,  
So the present, utterly form'd, impell'd by the past.)

### 2

<sup>3</sup> Passage, O soul, to India!  
Eclaircise the myths Asiatic—the primitive fables.

<sup>4</sup> Not you alone, proud truths of the world!  
Nor you alone, ye facts of modern science!  
But myths and fables of eld—Asia's, Africa's fables!



The far-darting beams of the spirit!—the unloos'd  
 dreams!  
 The deep diving bibles and legends ;  
 The daring plots of the poets—the elder religions ;  
 —O you temples fairer than lilies, pour'd over by the  
 rising sun!  
 O you fables, spurning the known, eluding the hold of  
 the known, mounting to heaven!  
 You lofty and dazzling towers, pinnacled, red as roses,  
 burnish'd with gold!  
 Towers of fables immortal, fashion'd from mortal  
 dreams!  
 You too I welcome, and fully, the same as the rest ;  
 You too with joy I sing.

## 3

<sup>5</sup> Passage to India!

Lo, soul! seest thou not God's purpose from the first?  
 The earth to be spann'd, connected by net-work,  
 The people to become brothers and sisters,  
 The races, neighbors, to marry and be given in mar-  
 riage,  
 The oceans to be cross'd, the distant brought near,  
 The lands to be welded together.

<sup>6</sup> (A worship new, I sing ;

You captains, voyagers, explorers, yours!  
 You engineers! you architects, machinists, yours!  
 You, not for trade or transportation only,  
 But in God's name, and for thy sake, O soul.)

## 4

<sup>7</sup> Passage to India!

Lo, soul, for thee, of tableaux twain,  
 I see, in one, the Suez canal initiated, open'd,  
 I see the procession of steamships, the Empress Euge-  
 nie's leading the van ;  
 I mark, from on deck, the strange landscape, the pure  
 sky, the level sand in the distance ;

I pass swiftly the picturesque groups, the workmen  
gather'd,  
The gigantic dredging machines.

<sup>8</sup> In one, again, different, (yet thine, all thine, O soul,  
the same,)

I see over my own continent the Pacific Railroad, sur-  
mounting every barrier ;

I see continual trains of cars winding along the Platte,  
carrying freight and passengers ;

I hear the locomotives rushing and roaring, and the  
shrill steam-whistle,

I hear the echoes reverberate through the grandest  
scenery in the world ;

I cross the Laramie plains—I note the rocks in gro-  
tesque shapes—the buttes ;

I see the plentiful larkspur and wild onions—the bar-  
ren, colorless, sage-deserts ;

I see in glimpses afar, or towering immediately above  
me, the great mountains—I see the Wind River  
and the Wahsatch mountains ;

I see the Monument mountain and the Eagle's Nest—  
I pass the Promontory—I ascend the Nevadas ;

I scan the noble Elk mountain, and wind around its  
base ;

I see the Humboldt range—I thread the valley and  
cross the river,

I see the clear waters of Lake Tahoe—I see forests of  
majestic pines,

Or, crossing the great desert, the alkaline plains, I be-  
hold enchanting mirages of waters and meadows ;

Marking through these, and after all, in duplicate slen-  
der lines,

Bridging the three or four thousand miles of land  
travel,

Tying the Eastern to the Western sea,  
The road between Europe and Asia.

<sup>9</sup> (Ah Genoese, thy dream ! thy dream !  
Centuries after thou art laid in thy grave,  
The shore thou foundest verifies thy dream !)

## 5

<sup>10</sup> Passage to India!

Struggles of many a captain—tales of many a sailor  
dead!

Over my mood, stealing and spreading they come,  
Like clouds and cloudlets in the unreach'd sky.

<sup>11</sup> Along all history, down the slopes,

As a rivulet running, sinking now, and now again to  
the surface rising,

A ceaseless thought, a varied train—Lo, soul! to thee,  
thy sight, they rise,

The plans, the voyages again, the expeditions:

Again Vasco de Gama sails forth;

Again the knowledge gain'd, the mariner's compass,

Lands found, and nations born—thou born, America,  
(a hemisphere unborn,)

For purpose vast, man's long probation fill'd,

Thou, rondure of the world, at last accomplish'd.

## 6

<sup>12</sup> O, vast Rondure, swimming in space!

Cover'd all over with visible power and beauty!

Alternate light and day, and the teeming, spiritual  
darkness;

Unspeakable, high processions of sun and moon, and  
countless stars, above;

Below, the manifold grass and waters, animals, moun-  
tains, trees;

With inscrutable purpose—some hidden, prophetic  
intention;

Now, first, it seems, my thought begins to span thee.

<sup>13</sup> Down from the gardens of Asia, descending, radiat-  
ing,

Adam and Eve appear, then their myriad progeny after  
them,

Wandering, yearning, curious—with restless explo-  
rations,

With questionings, baffled, formless, feverish—with  
 never-happy hearts,  
 With that sad, incessant refrain, *Wherefore, unsatisfied  
 Soul?* and, *Whither, O mocking Life?*

<sup>14</sup> Ah, who shall soothe these feverish children?  
 Who justify these restless explorations?  
 Who speak the secret of impassive Earth?  
 Who bind it to us? What is this separate Nature, so  
 unnatural?  
 What is this Earth, to our affections? (unloving earth,  
 without a throb to answer ours;  
 Cold earth, the place of graves.)

<sup>15</sup> Yet, soul, be sure the first intent remains—and shall  
 be carried out;  
 (Perhaps even now the time has arrived.)

<sup>16</sup> After the seas are all cross'd, (as they seem already  
 cross'd,)  
 After the great captains and engineers have accomplish'd  
 their work,  
 After the noble inventors—after the scientists, the  
 chemist, the geologist, ethnologist,  
 Finally shall come the Poet, worthy that name;  
 The true Son of God shall come, singing his songs.

<sup>17</sup> Then, not your deeds only, O voyagers, O scientists  
 and inventors, shall be justified,  
 All these hearts, as of fretted children, shall be sooth'd,  
 All affection shall be fully responded to—the secret  
 shall be told;  
 All these separations and gaps shall be taken up, and  
 hook'd and link'd together;  
 The whole Earth—this cold, impassive, voiceless Earth,  
 shall be completely justified;  
 Trinitas divine shall be gloriously accomplish'd and  
 compacted by the true Son of God, the poet,  
 (He shall indeed pass the straits and conquer the  
 mountains,

He shall double the Cape of Good Hope to some purpose ;)  
 Nature and Man shall be disjoin'd and diffused no more,  
 The true Son of God shall absolutely fuse them.

## 7

<sup>18</sup> Year at whose open'd, wide-flung door I sing!  
 Year of the purpose accomplish'd!  
 Year of the marriage of continents, climates and oceans!  
 (No mere Doge of Venice now, wedding the Adriatic ;)  
 I see, O year, in you, the vast terraqueous globe, given,  
 and giving all,  
 Europe to Asia, Africa join'd, and they to the New  
 World ;  
 The lands, geographies, dancing before you, holding a  
 festival garland,  
 As brides and bridegrooms hand in hand.

## 8

<sup>19</sup> Passage to India!  
 Cooling airs from Caucasus far, soothing cradle of man,  
 The river Euphrates flowing, the past lit up again.

<sup>20</sup> Lo, soul, the retrospect, brought forward ;  
 The old, most populous, wealthiest of Earth's lands,  
 The streams of the Indus and the Ganges, and their  
 many affluents ;  
 (I, my shores of America walking to-day, behold, resum-  
 ing all,)  
 The tale of Alexander, on his warlike marches, suddenly  
 dying,  
 On one side China, and on the other side Persia and  
 Arabia,  
 To the south the great seas, and the Bay of Bengal ;  
 The flowing literatures, tremendous epics, religions,  
 castes,  
 Old occult Brahma, interminably far back—the tender  
 and junior Buddha,  
 Central and southern empires, and all their belongings,  
 possessors,



The wars of Tamerlane, the reign of Aurungzebe,  
 The traders, rulers, explorers, Moslems, Venetians,  
     Byzantium, the Arabs, Portuguese,  
 The first travelers, famous yet, Marco Polo, Batouta  
     the Moor,  
 Doubts to be solv'd, the map incognita, blanks to be  
     fill'd,  
 The foot of man unstay'd, the hands never at rest,  
 Thyself, O soul, that will not brook a challenge.

## 9

<sup>21</sup> The medieval navigators rise before me,  
 The world of 1492, with its awaken'd enterprise ;  
 Something swelling in humanity now like the sap of  
     the earth in spring,  
 The sunset splendor of chivalry declining.

<sup>22</sup> And who art thou, sad shade ?  
 Gigantic, visionary, thyself a visionary,  
 With majestic limbs, and pious, beaming eyes,  
 Spreading around, with every look of thine, a golden  
     world,  
 Enhuing it with gorgeous hues.

<sup>23</sup> As the chief histrion,  
 Down to the footlights walks, in some great scena,  
 Dominating the rest, I see the Admiral himself,  
 (History's type of courage, action, faith ;)  
 Behold him sail from Palos, leading his little fleet ;  
 His voyage behold—his return—his great fame,  
 His misfortunes, calumniators—behold him a prisoner,  
     chain'd,  
 Behold his dejection, poverty, death.

<sup>24</sup> (Curious, in time, I stand, noting the efforts of  
     heroes ;  
 Is the deferment long ? bitter the slander, poverty,  
     death ?  
 Lies the seed unreck'd for centuries in the ground ?  
     Lo ! to God's due occasion,

Uprising in the night, it sprouts, blooms,  
And fills the earth with use and beauty.)

## 10

<sup>25</sup> Passage indeed, O soul, to primal thought !  
Not lands and seas alone—thy own clear freshness,  
The young maturity of brood and bloom ;  
To realms of budding bibles.

<sup>26</sup> O soul, repressless, I with thee, and thou with me,  
Thy circumnavigation of the world begin ;  
Of man, the voyage of his mind's return,  
To reason's early paradise,  
Back, back to wisdom's birth, to innocent intuitions,  
Again with fair Creation.

## 11

<sup>27</sup> O we can wait no longer !  
We too take ship, O soul !  
Joyous, we too launch out on trackless seas !  
Fearless, for unknown shores, on waves of extasy to  
sail,  
Amid the wafting winds, (thou pressing me to thee, I  
thee to me, O soul,)  
Caroling free—singing our song of God,  
Chanting our chant of pleasant exploration.

<sup>28</sup> With laugh, and many a kiss,  
(Let others deprecate—let others weep for sin, remorse,  
humiliation ;)   
O soul, thou pleasest me—I thee.

<sup>29</sup> Ah, more than any priest, O soul, we too believe in  
God ;  
But with the mystery of God we dare not dally.

<sup>30</sup> O soul, thou pleasest me—I thee ;  
Sailing these seas, or on the hills, or waking in the  
night,

Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time, and Space, and  
 Death, like waters flowing,  
 Bear me, indeed, as through the regions infinite,  
 Whose air I breathe, whose ripples hear—lave me all  
 over ;  
 Bathe me, O God, in thee—mounting to thee,  
 I and my soul to range in range of thee.

<sup>31</sup> O Thou transcendant !  
 Nameless—the fibre and the breath !  
 Light of the light—shedding forth universes—thou  
 centre of them !  
 Thou mightier centre of the true, the good, the loving !  
 Thou moral, spiritual fountain ! affection's source ! thou  
 reservoir !  
 (O pensive soul of me ! O thirst unsatisfied ! waitest not  
 there ?  
 Waitest not haply for us, somewhere there, the Com-  
 rade perfect ?)  
 Thou pulse ! thou motive of the stars, suns, systems,  
 That, circling, move in order, safe, harmonious,  
 Athwart the shapeless vastnesses of space !  
 How should I think—how breathe a single breath—  
 how speak—if, out of myself,  
 I could not launch, to those, superior universes ?

<sup>32</sup> Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,  
 At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,  
 But that I, turning, call to thee, O soul, thou actual Me,  
 And lo ! thou gently masterest the orbs,  
 Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,  
 And fillest, swellest full, the vastnesses of Space.

<sup>33</sup> Greater than stars or suns,  
 Bounding, O soul, thou journeyest forth ;  
 —What love, than thine and ours could wider amplify ?  
 What aspirations, wishes, outvie thine and ours, O soul ?  
 What dreams of the ideal ? what plans of purity, per-  
 fection, strength ?

What cheerful willingness, for others' sake, to give up  
all?  
For others' sake to suffer all?

<sup>34</sup> Reckoning ahead, O soul, when thou, the time  
achiev'd,  
(The seas all cross'd, weather'd the capes, the voyage  
done,)  
Surrounded, copest, frontest God, yieldest, the aim  
attain'd,  
As, fill'd with friendship, love complete, the Elder  
Brother found,  
The Younger melts in fondness in his arms.

## 12

<sup>35</sup> Passage to more than India!  
Are thy wings plumed indeed for such far flights?  
O Soul, voyagest thou indeed on voyages like these?  
Disportest thou on waters such as these?  
Soundest below the Sanscrit and the Vedas?  
Then have thy bent unleash'd.

<sup>36</sup> Passage to you, your shores, ye aged fierce enigmas!  
Passage to you, to mastership of you, ye strangling  
problems!  
You, strew'd with the wrecks of skeletons, that, living,  
never reach'd you.

## 13

<sup>37</sup> Passage to more than India!  
O secret of the earth and sky!  
Of you, O waters of the sea! O winding creeks and  
rivers!  
Of you, O woods and fields! Of you, strong mountains  
of my land!  
Of you, O prairies! Of you, gray rocks!  
O morning red! O clouds! O rain and snows!  
O day and night, passage to you!

<sup>38</sup> O sun and moon, and all you stars! Sirius and  
Jupiter!  
Passage to you!

<sup>39</sup> Passage—immediate passage! the blood burns in my  
veins!  
Away, O soul! hoist instantly the anchor!  
Cut the hawsers—haul out—shake out every sail!  
Have we not stood here like trees in the ground long  
enough?  
Have we not grovell'd here long enough, eating and  
drinking like mere brutes?  
Have we not darken'd and dazed ourselves with books  
long enough?

<sup>40</sup> Sail forth! steer for the deep waters only!  
Reckless, O soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with  
me;  
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to  
go,  
And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.

<sup>41</sup> O my brave soul!  
O farther, farther sail!  
O daring joy, but safe! Are they not all the seas of  
God?  
O farther, farther, farther sail!



## THOUGHT.

As I sit with others, at a great feast, suddenly, while  
     the music is playing,  
 To my mind, (whence it comes I know not,) spectral, in  
     mist, of a wreck at sea ;  
 Of certain ships—how they sail from port with flying  
     streamers, and wafted kisses—and that is the  
     last of them !  
 Of the solemn and murky mystery about the fate of the  
     President ;  
 Of the flower of the marine science of fifty generations,  
     founder'd off the Northeast coast, and going  
     down—Of the steamship Arctic going down,  
 Of the veil'd tableau—Women gather'd together on  
     deck, pale, heroic, waiting the moment that  
     draws so close—O the moment !  
 A huge sob—A few bubbles—the white foam spiriting  
     up—And then the women gone,  
 Sinking there, while the passionless wet flows on—And  
     I now pondering, Are those women indeed gone ?  
 Are Souls drown'd and destroy'd so ?  
 Is only matter triumphant ?

---

## O LIVING ALWAYS—ALWAYS DYING !

O LIVING always—always dying !  
 O the burials of me, past and present !  
 O me, while I stride ahead, material, visible, imperious  
     as ever !  
 O me, what I was for years, now dead, (I lament not—  
     I am content ;)   
 O to disengage myself from those corpses of me, which  
     I turn and look at, where I cast them !  
 To pass on, (O living ! always living !) and leave the  
     corpses behind !

## PROUD MUSIC OF THE STORM.

1

<sup>1</sup> PROUD music of the storm!

Blast that careers so free, whistling across the prairies!  
Strong hum of forest tree-tops! Wind of the mountains!

Personified dim shapes! you hidden orchestras!  
You serenades of phantoms, with instruments alert,  
Blending, with Nature's rhythmus, all the tongues of  
nations;

You chords left as by vast composers! you choruses!  
You formless, free, religious dances! you from the  
Orient!

You undertone of rivers, roar of pouring cataracts;  
You sounds from distant guns, with galloping cavalry!  
Echoes of camps, with all the different bugle-calls!  
Trooping tumultuous, filling the midnight late, bending  
me powerless,

Entering my lonesome slumber-chamber—Why have  
you seiz'd me?

2

<sup>2</sup> Come forward, O my Soul, and let the rest retire;  
Listen—lose not—it is toward thee they tend;  
Parting the midnight, entering my slumber-chamber,  
For thee they sing and dance, O Soul.

<sup>3</sup> A festival song!

The duet of the bridegroom and the bride—a marriage-march,

With lips of love, and hearts of lovers, fill'd to the brim  
with love;

The red-flush'd cheeks, and perfumes—the cortege  
swarming, full of friendly faces, young and old,

To flutes' clear notes, and sounding harps' cantabile.

3

<sup>4</sup> Now loud approaching drums!

Victoria! see'st thou in powder-smoke the banners torn  
but flying? the rout of the baffled?

Hearest those shouts of a conquering army?

<sup>5</sup> (Ah, Soul, the sobs of women—the wounded groaning  
in agony,

The hiss and crackle of flames—the blacken'd ruins—  
the embers of cities,

The dirge and desolation of mankind.)

4

<sup>6</sup> Now airs antique and medieval fill me!

I see and hear old harpers with their harps, at Welsh  
festivals:

I hear the minnesingers, singing their lays of love,

I hear the minstrels, gleemen, troubadours, of the feudal  
ages.

5

<sup>7</sup> Now the great organ sounds,

Tremulous—while underneath, (as the hid footholds of  
the earth,

On which arising, rest, and leaping forth, depend,

All shapes of beauty, grace and strength—all hues we  
know,

Green blades of grass, and warbling birds—children  
that gambol and play—the clouds of heaven  
above,)

The strong base stands, and its pulsations intermits  
 not,  
 Bathing, supporting, merging all the rest—maternity  
 of all the rest ;  
 And with it every instrument in multitudes,  
 The players playing—all the world's musicians,  
 The solemn hymns and masses, rousing adoration,  
 All passionate heart-chants, sorrowful appeals,  
 The measureless sweet vocalists of ages,  
 And for their solvent setting, Earth's own diapason,  
 Of winds and woods and mighty ocean waves ;  
 A new composite orchestra—binder of years and climes  
 —ten-fold renewer,  
 As of the far-back days the poets tell—the Paradiso,  
 The straying thence, the separation long, but now the  
 wandering done,  
 The journey done, the Journeyman come home,  
 And Man and Art with Nature fused again.

## 6

<sup>8</sup> Tutti ! for Earth and Heaven !  
 The Almighty Leader now for me, for once, has signal'd  
 with his wand.

<sup>9</sup> The manly strophe of the husbands of the world,  
 And all the wives responding.

<sup>10</sup> The tongues of violins !  
 (I think, O tongues, ye tell this heart, that cannot tell  
 itself ;  
 This brooding, yearning heart, that cannot tell itself.)

## 7

<sup>11</sup> Ah, from a little child,  
 Thou knowest, Soul, how to me all sounds became  
 music ;  
 My mother's voice, in lullaby or hymn ;  
 (The voice—O tender voices—memory's loving voices !  
 Last miracle of all—O dearest mother's, sister's, voices ;)

The rain, the growing corn, the breeze among the  
 long-leav'd corn,  
 The measur'd sea-surf, beating on the sand,  
 The twittering bird, the hawk's sharp scream,  
 The wild-fowl's notes at night, as flying low, migrating  
 north or south,  
 The psalm in the country church, or mid the clustering  
 trees, the open air camp-meeting,  
 The fiddler in the tavern—the glee, the long-strung  
 sailor-song,  
 The lowing cattle, bleating sheep—the crowing cock at  
 dawn.

## 8

<sup>12</sup> All songs of current lands come sounding 'round me,  
 The German airs of friendship, wine and love,  
 Irish ballads, merry jigs and dances—English warbles,  
 Chansons of France, Scotch tunes—and o'er the rest,  
 Italia's peerless compositions.

<sup>13</sup> Across the stage, with pallor on her face, yet lurid  
 passion,  
 Stalks Norma, brandishing the dagger in her hand.

<sup>14</sup> I see poor crazed Lucia's eyes' unnatural gleam ;  
 Her hair down her back falls loose and dishevell'd.

<sup>15</sup> I see where Ernani, walking the bridal garden,  
 Amid the scent of night-roses, radiant, holding his  
 bride by the hand,  
 Hears the infernal call, the death-pledge of the horn.

<sup>16</sup> To crossing swords, and grey hairs bared to heaven,  
 The clear, electric base and baritone of the world,  
 The trombone duo—Libertad forever !

<sup>17</sup> From Spanish chestnut trees' dense shade,  
 By old and heavy convent walls, a wailing song,  
 Song of lost love—the torch of youth and life quench'd  
 in despair,  
 Song of the dying swan—Fernando's heart is breaking.



<sup>18</sup> Awaking from her woes at last, retriev'd Amina  
sings ;  
Copious as stars, and glad as morning light, the tor-  
rents of her joy.

<sup>19</sup> (The teeming lady comes !  
The lustrous 'orb—Venus contralto—the blooming  
mother,  
Sister of loftiest gods—Alboni's self I hear.)

## 9

<sup>20</sup> I hear those odes, symphonies, operas ;  
I hear in the *William Tell*, the music of an arous'd and  
angry people ;  
I hear Meyerbeer's *Huguenots*, the *Prophet*, or *Robert* ;  
Gounod's *Faust*, or Mozart's *Don Juan*.

## 10

<sup>21</sup> I hear the dance-music of all nations,  
The waltz, (some delicious measure, lapsing, bathing me  
in bliss ;)  
The bolero, to tinkling guitars and clattering castanets.

<sup>22</sup> I see religious dances old and new,  
I hear the sound of the Hebrew lyre,  
I see the Crusaders marching, bearing the cross on  
high, to the martial clang of cymbals ;  
I hear dervishes monotonously chanting, interspers'd  
with frantic shouts, as they spin around, turning  
always towards Mecca ;  
I see the rapt religious dances of the Persians and the  
Arabs ;  
Again, at Eleusis, home of Ceres, I see the modern  
Greeks dancing,  
I hear them clapping their hands, as they bend their  
bodies,  
I hear the metrical shuffling of their feet.

<sup>23</sup> I see again the wild old Corybantian dance, the performers wounding each other ;  
 I see the Roman youth, to the shrill sound of flageolets,  
 throwing and catching their weapons,  
 As they fall on their knees, and rise again.

<sup>24</sup> I hear from the Mussulman mosque the muezzin calling ;  
 I see the worshippers within, (nor form, nor sermon, argument, nor word,  
 But silent, strange, devout—rais'd, glowing heads—extatic faces.)

## 11

<sup>25</sup> I hear the Egyptian harp of many strings,  
 The primitive chants of the Nile boatmen ;  
 The sacred imperial hymns of China,  
 To the delicate sounds of the king, (the stricken wood and stone ;)  
 Or to Hindu flutes, and the fretting twang of the vina,  
 A band of bayaderes.

## 12

<sup>26</sup> Now Asia, Africa leave me—Europe, seizing, inflates me ;  
 To organs huge, and bands, I hear as from vast courses of voices,  
 Luther's strong hymn, *Eine feste Burg ist unser Gott* ;  
 Rossini's *Stabat Mater dolorosa* ;  
 Or, floating in some high cathedral dim, with gorgeous color'd windows,  
 The passionate *Agnus Dei*, or *Gloria in Excelsis*.

## 13

<sup>27</sup> Composers ! mighty maestros !  
 And you, sweet singers of old lands—Soprani ! Tenori ! Bassi !  
 To you a new bard, carolling free in the west,  
 Obeisant, sends his love.

<sup>28</sup> (Such led to thee, O Soul!  
All senses, shows and objects, lead to thee,  
But now, it seems to me, sound leads o'er all the  
rest.)

## 14

<sup>29</sup> I hear the annual singing of the children in St. Paul's  
Cathedral ;  
Or, under the high roof of some colossal hall, the sym-  
phonies, oratorios of Beethoven, Handel, or  
Haydn ;  
The *Creation*, in billows of godhood laves me.

<sup>30</sup> Give me to hold all sounds, (I, madly struggling,  
cry.)  
Fill me with all the voices of the universe,  
Endow me with their throbbings—Nature's also,  
The tempests, waters, winds—operas and chants—  
marches and dances,  
Utter—pour in—for I would take them all.

## 15

<sup>31</sup> Then I woke softly,  
And pausing, questioning awhile the music of my  
dream,  
And questioning all those reminiscences—the tempest  
in its fury,  
And all the songs of sopranos and tenors,  
And those rapt oriental dances, of religious fervor,  
And the sweet varied instruments, and the diapason of  
organs,  
And all the artless plaints of love, and grief and  
death,  
I said to my silent, curious Soul, out of the bed of the  
slumber-chamber,  
Come, for I have found the clue I sought so long,  
Let us go forth refresh'd amid the day,  
Cheerfully tallying life, walking the world, the real,  
Nourish'd henceforth by our celestial dream.

<sup>32</sup> And I said, moreover,  
Haply, what thou hast heard, O Soul, was not the sound  
    of winds,  
Nor dream of raging storm, nor sea-hawk's flapping  
    wings, nor harsh scream,  
Nor vocalism of sun-bright Italy,  
Nor German organ majestic—nor vast concourse of  
    voices—nor layers of harmonies ;  
Nor strophes of husbands and wives—nor sound of  
    marching soldiers,  
Nor flutes, nor harps, nor the bugle-calls of camps ;  
But, to a new rhythmus fitted for thee,  
Poems, bridging the way from Life to Death, vaguely  
    wafted in night air, uncaught, unwritten,  
Which, let us go forth in the bold day, and write.

## ASHES OF SOLDIERS.

---

*Again a verse for sake of you,  
You soldiers in the ranks—you Volunteers,  
Who bravely fighting, silent fell,  
To fill unmention'd graves.*

---

### ASHES OF SOLDIERS.

<sup>1</sup> ASHES of soldiers !

As I muse, retrospective, murmuring a chant in thought,  
Lo! the war resumes—again to my sense your shapes,  
And again the advance of armies.

<sup>2</sup> Noiseless as mists and vapors,  
From their graves in the trenches ascending,  
From the cemeteries all through Virginia and Tennessee,  
From every point of the compass, out of the countless  
unnamed graves,  
In wafted clouds, in myriads large, or squads of twos  
or threes, or single ones, they come,  
And silently gather round me,

<sup>3</sup> Now sound no note, O trumpeters!  
Not at the head of my cavalry, parading on spirited  
horses,  
With sabres drawn and glist'ning, and carbines by  
their thighs—(ah, my brave horsemen !



My handsome, tan-faced horsemen ! what life, what joy  
and pride,  
With all the perils, were yours !)

<sup>4</sup> Nor you drummers—neither at reveille, at dawn,  
Nor the long roll alarming the camp—nor even the  
muffled beat for a burial ;  
Nothing from you, this time, O drummers, bearing my  
warlike drums.

<sup>5</sup> But aside from these, and the marts of wealth, and  
the crowded promenade,  
Admitting around me comrades close, unseen by the  
rest, and voiceless,  
The slain elate and alive again—the dust and debris  
alive,  
I chant this chant of my silent soul, in the name of all  
dead soldiers.

<sup>6</sup> Faces so pale, with wondrous eyes, very dear, gather  
closer yet ;  
Draw close, but speak not.

<sup>7</sup> Phantoms of countless lost !  
Invisible to the rest, henceforth become my compan-  
ions !  
Follow me ever ! desert me not, while I live.

<sup>8</sup> Sweet are the blooming cheeks of the living ! sweet  
are the musical voices sounding !  
But sweet, ah sweet, are the dead, with their silent eyes.

<sup>9</sup> Dearest comrades ! all is over and long gone ;  
But love is not over—and what love, O comrades !  
Perfume from battle-fields rising—up from foeter  
arising.

<sup>10</sup> Perfume therefore my chant, O love ! immortal Love !  
Give me to bathe the memories of all dead soldiers,  
Shroud them, embalm them, cover them all over with  
tender pride.

<sup>11</sup> Perfume all! make all wholesome!  
Make these ashes to nourish and blossom,  
O love! O chant! solve all, fructify all with the last  
chemistry.

<sup>12</sup> Give me exhaustless—make me a fountain,  
That I exhale love from me wherever I go, like a moist  
perennial dew,  
For the ashes of all dead soldiers.



## IN MIDNIGHT SLEEP.

## 1

In midnight sleep, of many a face of anguish,  
Of the look at first of the mortally wounded—of that  
indescribable look;  
Of the dead on their backs, with arms extended wide,  
I dream, I dream, I dream.

## 2

Of scenes of nature, fields and mountains;  
Of skies, so beauteous after a storm—and at night the  
moon so unearthly bright,  
Shining sweetly, shining down, where we dig the  
trenches and gather the heaps,  
I dream, I dream, I dream.

## 3

Long, long have they pass'd—faces and trenches and  
fields;  
Where through the carnage I moved with a callous com-  
posure—or away from the fallen,  
Onward I sped at the time—But now of their forms at  
night,  
I dream, I dream, I dream.

## CAMPS OF GREEN.

<sup>1</sup> Not alone those camps of white, O soldiers,  
When, as order'd forward, after a long march,  
Footsore and weary, soon as the light lessen'd, we  
    halted for the night ;  
Some of us so fatigued, carrying the gun and knapsack,  
    dropping asleep in our tracks ;  
Others pitching the little tents, and the fires lit up  
    began to sparkle ;  
Outposts of pickets posted, surrounding, alert through  
    the dark,  
And a word provided for countersign, careful for safety ;  
Till to the call of the drummers at daybreak loudly  
    beating the drums,  
We rose up refresh'd, the night and sleep pass'd over,  
    and resumed our journey,  
Or proceeded to battle.

<sup>2</sup> Lo ! the camps of the tents of green,  
Which the days of peace keep filling, and the days of  
    war keep filling,  
With a mystic army, (is it too order'd forward ? is it  
    too only halting awhile,  
Till night and sleep pass over ?)

<sup>3</sup> Now in those camps of green—in their tents dotting  
    the world ;  
In the parents, children, husbands, wives, in them—in  
    the old and young,  
Sleeping under the sunlight, sleeping under the moon-  
    light, content and silent there at last,  
Behold the mighty bivouac-field, and waiting-camp of  
    all,  
Of corps and generals all, and the President over the  
    corps and generals all,  
And of each of us, O soldiers, and of each and all in  
    the ranks we fought,  
(There without hatred we shall all meet.)

4 For presently, O soldiers, we too camp in our place in  
 the bivouac-camps of green ;  
 But we need not provide for outposts, nor word for the  
 countersign,  
 Nor drummer to beat the morning drum.

---

### TO A CERTAIN CIVILIAN.

Did you ask dulcet rhymes from me ?  
 Did you seek the civilian's peaceful and languishing  
 rhymes ?  
 Did you find what I sang erewhile so hard to follow ?  
 Why I was not singing erewhile for you to follow, to  
 understand—nor am I now ;  
 (I have been born of the same as the war was born ;  
 The drum-corps' harsh rattle is to me sweet music—I  
 love well the martial dirge,  
 With slow wail, and convulsive throb, leading the offi-  
 cer's funeral :)  
 —What to such as you, anyhow, such a poet as I?—  
 therefore leave my works,  
 And go lull yourself with what you can understand—  
 and with piano-tunes ;  
 For I lull nobody—and you will never understand me.

---

### PENSIVE ON HER DEAD GAZING, I HEARD THE MOTHER OF ALL.

PENSIVE, on her dead gazing, I heard the Mother of All,  
 Desperate, on the torn bodies, on the forms covering  
 the battle-fields gazing ;  
 (As the last gun ceased—but the scent of the powder-  
 smoke linger'd ;)

As she call'd to her earth with mournful voice while she  
 stalk'd :

Absorb them well, O my earth, she cried—I charge you,  
lose not my sons ! lose not an atom ;  
And you streams, absorb them well, taking their dear  
blood ;  
And you local spots, and you airs that swim above  
lightly,  
And all you essences of soil and growth—and you, my  
rivers' depths ;  
And you, mountain sides—and the woods where my  
dear children's blood, trickling, reddened ;  
And you trees, down in your roots, to bequeath to all  
future trees,  
My dead absorb—my young men's beautiful bodies  
absorb—and their precious, precious, precious  
blood ;  
Which holding in trust for me, faithfully back again  
give me, many a year hence,  
In unseen essence and odor of surface and grass, centuries  
hence ;  
In blowing airs from the fields, back again give me my  
darlings—give my immortal heroes ;  
Exhale me them centuries hence—breathe me their  
breath—let not an atom be lost ;  
O years and graves ! O air and soil ! O my dead, an  
aroma sweet !  
Exhale them perennial, sweet death, years, centuries  
hence.



## PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S BURIAL HYMN.

---

WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOOR-  
YARD BLOOM'D.

1

<sup>1</sup> WHEN lilacs last in the door-yard bloom'd,  
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in  
the night,  
I mourn'd—and yet shall mourn with ever-returning  
spring.

<sup>2</sup> O ever-returning spring! trinity sure to me you  
bring;  
Lilac blooming perennial, and drooping star in the  
west,  
And thought of him I love.

2

<sup>3</sup> O powerful, western, fallen star!  
O shades of night! O moody, tearful night!  
O great star disappear'd! O the black murk that hides  
the star!  
O cruel hands that hold me powerless! O helpless soul  
of me!  
O harsh surrounding cloud, that will not free my soul!

## 3

<sup>4</sup> In the door-yard fronting an old farm-house, near the  
white-wash'd palings,  
Stands the lilac bush, tall-growing, with heart-shaped  
leaves of rich green,  
With many a pointed blossom, rising, delicate, with the  
perfume strong I love,  
With every leaf a miracle ..... and from this bush in  
the door-yard,  
With delicate-color'd blossoms, and heart-shaped leaves  
of rich green,  
A sprig, with its flower, I break.

## 4

<sup>5</sup> In the swamp, in secluded recesses,  
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.

<sup>6</sup> Solitary, the thrush,  
The hermit, withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settle-  
ments,  
Sings by himself a song.

<sup>7</sup> Song of the bleeding throat!  
Death's outlet song of life—(for well, dear brother, I  
know,  
If thou wast not gifted to sing, thou would'st surely  
die.)

## 5

<sup>8</sup> Over the breast of the spring, the land, amid cities,  
Amid lanes, and through old woods, (where lately the  
violets peep'd from the ground, spotting the gray  
debris ;)  
Amid the grass in the fields each side of the lanes—  
passing the endless grass ;  
Passing the yellow-spear'd wheat, every grain from its  
shroud in the dark-brown fields uprising ;  
Passing the apple-tree blows of white and pink in the  
orchards ;

Carrying a corpse to where it shall rest in the grave,  
Night and day journeys a coffin.

## 6

<sup>9</sup> Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,  
Through day and night, with the great cloud darkening  
the land,  
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags, with the cities  
draped in black,  
With the show of the States themselves, as of crape-  
veil'd women, standing,  
With processions long and winding, and the flambeaus  
of the night,  
With the countless torches lit—with the silent sea of  
faces, and the unbared heads,  
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the  
sombre faces,  
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices  
rising strong and solemn ;  
With all the mournful voices of the dirges. pour'd around  
the coffin,  
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—Where  
amid these you journey,  
With the tolling, tolling bells' perpetual clang ;  
Here ! coffin that slowly passes,  
I give you my sprig of lilac.

## 7

<sup>10</sup> (Nor for you, for one, alone ;  
Blossoms and branches green to coffins all I bring :  
For fresh as the morning—thus would I carol a song  
for you, O sane and sacred death.

<sup>11</sup> All over bouquets of roses,  
O death ! I cover you over with roses and early lilies ;  
But mostly and now the lilac that blooms the first,  
Copious, I break, I break the sprigs from the bushes ;  
With loaded arms I come, pouring for you,  
For you, and the coffins all of you, O death.)

## 8

<sup>12</sup> O western orb, sailing the heaven!  
Now I know what you must have meant, as a month  
    since we walk'd,  
As we walk'd up and down in the dark blue so mystic,  
As we walk'd in silence the transparent shadowy night,  
As I saw you had something to tell, as you bent to me  
    night after night,  
As you droop'd from the sky low down, as if to my side,  
    (while the other stars all look'd on ;)  
As we wander'd together the solemn night, (for some-  
    thing, I know not what, kept me from sleep ;)  
As the night advanced, and I saw on the rim of the  
    west, ere you went, how full you were of woe ;  
As I stood on the rising ground in the breeze, in the  
    cold transparent night,  
As I watch'd where you pass'd and was lost in the  
    netherward black of the night,  
As my soul, in its trouble, dissatisfied, sank, as where  
    you, sad orb,  
Concluded, dropt in the night, and was gone.

## 9

<sup>13</sup> Sing on, there in the swamp!  
O singer bashful and tender ! I hear your notes—I hear  
    your call ;  
I hear—I come presently—I understand you ;  
But a moment I linger—for the lustrous star has de-  
    tain'd me ;  
The star, my departing comrade, holds and detains me.

## 10

<sup>14</sup> O how shall I warble myself for the dead one there I  
    loved ?  
And how shall I deck my song for the large sweet soul  
    that has gone ?  
And what shall my perfume be, for the grave of him I  
    love ?

<sup>15</sup> Sea-winds, blown from east and west,  
Blown from the eastern sea, and blown from the west-  
ern sea, till there on the prairies meeting :  
These, and with these, and the breath of my chant,  
I perfume the grave of him I love.

## 11

<sup>16</sup> O what shall I hang on the chamber walls?  
And what shall the pictures be that I hang on the  
walls,  
To adorn the burial-house of him I love?

<sup>17</sup> Pictures of growing spring, and farms, and homes,  
With the Fourth-month eve at sundown, and the gray  
smoke lucid and bright,  
With floods of the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indo-  
lent, sinking sun, burning, expanding the air ;  
With the fresh sweet herbage under foot, and the pale  
green leaves of the trees prolific ;  
In the distance the flowing glaze, the breast of the river,  
with a wind-dapple here and there ;  
With ranging hills on the banks, with many a line  
against the sky, and shadows ;  
And the city at hand, with dwellings so dense, and  
stacks of chimneys,  
And all the scenes of life, and the workshops, and the  
workmen homeward returning.

## 12

<sup>18</sup> Lo ! body and soul ! this land !  
Mighty Manhattan, with spires, and the sparkling and  
hurrying tides, and the ships ;  
The varied and ample land—the South and the North  
in the light—Ohio's shores, and flashing Mis-  
souri,  
And ever the far-spreading prairies, cover'd with grass  
and corn.

<sup>19</sup> Lo ! the most excellent sun, so calm and haughty ;  
The violet and purple morn, with just-felt breezes ;



The gentle, soft-born, measureless light ;  
 The miracle, spreading, bathing all—the fulfill'd  
     noon ;  
 The coming eve, delicious—the welcome night, and the  
     stars,  
 Over my cities shining all, enveloping man and land.

## 13

<sup>20</sup> Sing on ! sing on, you gray-brown bird !  
 Sing from the swamps, the recesses—pour your chant  
     from the bushes ;  
 Limitless out of the dusk, out of the cedars and  
     pines.

<sup>21</sup> Sing on, dearest brother—warble your reedy song ;  
 Loud human song, with voice of uttermost woe.

<sup>22</sup> O liquid, and free, and tender !  
 O wild and loose to my soul ! O wondrous singer !  
 You only I hear . . . . . yet the star holds me, (but will  
     soon depart ;)   
 Yet the lilac, with mastering odor, holds me.

## 14

<sup>23</sup> Now while I sat in the day, and look'd forth,  
 In the close of the day, with its light, and the fields of  
     spring, and the farmer preparing his crops,  
 In the large unconscious scenery of my land, with its  
     lakes and forests,  
 In the heavenly aerial beauty, (after the perturb'd  
     winds, and the storms ;)   
 Under the arching heavens of the afternoon swift pass-  
     ing, and the voices of children and women,  
 The many-moving sea-tides,—and I saw the ships how  
     they sail'd,  
 And the summer approaching with richness, and the  
     fields all busy with labor,  
 And the infinite separate houses, how they all went on,  
     each with its meals and minutia of daily usages ;

And the streets, how their throbbings throb'd, and the  
cities pent—lo ! then and there,  
Falling upon them all, and among them all, enveloping  
me with the rest,  
Appear'd the cloud, appear'd the long black trail ;  
And I knew Death, its thought, and the sacred knowl-  
edge of death.

## 15

<sup>24</sup> Then with the knowledge of death as walking one  
side of me,  
And the thought of death close-walking the other side  
of me,  
And I in the middle, as with companions, and as hold-  
ing the hands of companions,  
I fled forth to the hiding receiving night, that talks  
not,  
Down to the shores of the water, the path by the swamp  
in the dimness,  
To the solemn shadowy cedars, and ghostly pines so  
still.

<sup>25</sup> And the singer so shy to the rest receiv'd me ;  
The gray-brown bird I know, receiv'd us comrades  
three ;  
And he sang what seem'd the carol of death, and a  
verse for him I love.

<sup>26</sup> From deep secluded recesses,  
From the fragrant cedars, and the ghostly pines so  
still,  
Came the carol of the bird.

<sup>27</sup> And the charm of the carol rapt me,  
As I held, as if by their hands, my comrades in the  
night ;  
And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the  
bird.

## DEATH CAROL.

16

<sup>28</sup> Come, lovely and soothing Death,  
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,  
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,  
Sooner or later, delicate Death.

<sup>29</sup> Prais'd be the fathomless universe,  
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious ;  
And for love, sweet love—But praise ! praise ! praise !  
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding Death.

<sup>30</sup> Dark Mother, always gliding near, with soft feet,  
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome ?  
Then I chant it for thee—I glorify thee above all ;  
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come  
unfalteringly.

<sup>31</sup> Approach, strong Deliveress !  
When it is so—when thou hast taken them, I joyously sing  
the dead,  
Lost in the loving, floating ocean of thee,  
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O Death.

<sup>32</sup> From me to thee glad serenades,  
Dances for thee I propose, saluting thee—adornments and  
feastings for thee ;  
And the sights of the open landscape, and the high-spread  
sky, are fitting,  
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

<sup>33</sup> The night, in silence, under many a star ;  
The ocean shore, and the husky whispering wave, whose  
voice I know ;  
And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well-veil'd Death,  
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

<sup>34</sup> Over the tree-tops I float thee a song !  
Over the rising and sinking waves—over the myriad fields,  
and the prairies wide ;

*Over the dense-pack'd cities all, and the teeming wharves  
and ways,  
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee, O Death !*

## 17

<sup>35</sup> To the tally of my soul,  
Loud and strong kept up the gray-brown bird,  
With pure, deliberate notes, spreading, filling the night.

<sup>36</sup> Loud in the pines and cedars dim,  
Clear in the freshness moist, and the swamp-perfume ;  
And I with my comrades there in the night.

<sup>37</sup> While my sight that was bound in my eyes unclosed,  
As to long panoramas of visions.

## 18

<sup>38</sup> I saw askant the armies ;  
And I saw, as in noiseless dreams, hundreds of battle-  
flags ;  
Borne through the smoke of the battles, and pierc'd  
with missiles, I saw them,  
And carried hither and yon through the smoke, and  
torn and bloody ;  
And at last but a few shreds left on the staffs, (and all  
in silence,)  
And the staffs all splinter'd and broken.

<sup>39</sup> I saw battle-corpses, myriads of them,  
And the white skeletons of young men—I saw them ;  
I saw the debris and debris of all the dead soldiers of  
the war ;  
But I saw they were not as was thought ;  
They themselves were fully at rest—they suffer'd not ;  
The living remain'd and suffer'd—the mother suffer'd,  
And the wife and the child, and the musing comrade  
suffer'd,  
And the armies that remain'd suffer'd.

## 19

<sup>40</sup> Passing the visions, passing the night ;  
Passing, unloosing the hold of my comrades' hands ;

Passing the song of the hermit bird, and the tallying  
song of my soul,  
(Victorious song, death's outlet song, yet varying, ever-  
altering song,  
As low and wailing, yet clear the notes, rising and fall-  
ing, flooding the night,  
Sadly sinking and fainting, as warning and warning,  
and yet again bursting with joy,  
Covering the earth, and filling the spread of the heaven,  
As that powerful psalm in the night I heard from  
recesses,)  
Passing, I leave thee, lilac with heart-shaped leaves ;  
I leave thee there in the door-yard, blooming, returning  
with spring.

<sup>41</sup> I cease from my song for thee ;  
From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west,  
communing with thee,  
O comrade lustrous, with silver face in the night.

## 20

<sup>42</sup> Yet each I keep, and all, retrievements out of the  
night ;  
The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-brown bird,  
And the tallying chant, the echo arous'd in my soul,  
With the lustrous and drooping star, with the counte-  
nance full of woe,  
With the lilac tall, and its blossoms of mastering odor ;  
With the holders holding my hand, nearing the call of  
the bird,  
Comrades mine, and I in the midst, and their memory  
ever I keep—for the dead I loved so well ;  
For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands . . .  
and this for his dear sake ;  
Lilac and star and bird, twined with the chant of my  
soul,  
There in the fragrant pines, and the cedars dusk and dim.



O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

1

O CAPTAIN! my Captain! our fearful trip is done ;  
 The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought  
     is won ;  
 The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,  
 While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and  
     daring :  
 But O heart! heart! heart!  
     O the bleeding drops of red,  
     Where on the deck my Captain lies,  
     Fallen cold and dead.

2

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells ;  
 Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle  
     trills ;  
 For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the  
     shores a-crowding ;  
 For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces  
     turning ;  
 Here Captain! dear father!  
     This arm beneath your head ;  
     It is some dream that on the deck,  
     You've fallen cold and dead.

3

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still ;  
 My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;  
 The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed  
     and done ;  
 From fearful trip, the victor ship, comes in with object  
     won :  
 Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!  
     But I, with mournful tread,  
     Walk the deck my Captain lies,  
     Fallen cold and dead.

## HUSH'D BE THE CAMPS TO-DAY.

*(May 4, 1865.)*

1

HUSH'd be the camps to day ;  
And, soldiers, let us drape our war-worn weapons ;  
And each with musing soul retire, to celebrate,  
Our dear commander's death.

<sup>2</sup> No more for him life's stormy conflicts ;  
Nor victory, nor defeat—no more time's dark events,  
Charging like ceaseless clouds across the sky.

2

<sup>3</sup> But sing, poet, in our name ;  
Sing of the love we bore him—because you, dweller in  
camps, know it truly.

<sup>4</sup> As they invault the coffin there ;  
Sing—as they close the doors of earth upon him—  
one verse,  
For the heavy hearts of soldiers.



## THIS DUST WAS ONCE THE MAN.

THIS dust was once the Man,  
Gentle, plain, just and resolute—under whose cautious  
hand,  
Against the foulest crime in history known in any land  
or age,  
Was saved the Union of These States.

## POEM OF JOYS.

1

- <sup>1</sup> O to make the most jubilant poem!  
Even to set off these, and merge with these, the carols  
    of Death;  
O full of music! full of manhood, womanhood, in-  
    fancy!  
Full of common employments! full of grain and trees.
- <sup>2</sup> O for the voices of animals! O for the swiftness and  
    balance of fishes!  
O for the dropping of rain-drops in a poem!  
O for the sunshine, and motion of waves in a poem.
- <sup>3</sup> O the joy of my spirit! it is uncaged! it darts like  
    lightning!  
It is not enough to have this globe, or a certain time—  
    I will have thousands of globes, and all time.

2

- <sup>4</sup> O the engineer's joys!  
To go with a locomotive!  
To hear the hiss of steam—the merry shriek—the  
    steam-whistle—the laughing locomotive!  
To push with resistless way, and speed off in the dis-  
    tance.
- <sup>5</sup> O the gleesome saunter over fields and hill-sides!

The leaves and flowers of the commonest weeds—the  
moist fresh stillness of the woods,  
The exquisite smell of the earth at day-break, and  
all through the forenoon.

<sup>6</sup> O the horseman's and horsewoman's joys!  
The saddle—the gallop—the pressure upon the seat—  
the cool gurgling by the ears and hair.

## 3

<sup>7</sup> O the fireman's joys!  
I hear the alarm at dead of night,  
I hear bells—shouts!—I pass the crowd—I run!  
The sight of the flames maddens me with pleasure.

<sup>8</sup> O the joy of the strong-brawn'd fighter, towering in  
the arena, in perfect condition, conscious of  
power, thirsting to meet his opponent.

<sup>9</sup> O the joy of that vast elemental sympathy which only  
the human Soul is capable of generating and  
emitting in steady and limitless floods.

## 4

<sup>10</sup> O the mother's joys!  
The watching—the endurance—the precious love—the  
anguish—the patiently yielded life.

<sup>11</sup> O the joy of increase, growth, recuperation;  
The joy of soothing and pacifying—the joy of concord  
and harmony.

<sup>12</sup> O to go back to the place where I was born!  
To hear the birds sing once more!  
To ramble about the house and barn, and over the  
fields, once more,  
And through the orchard and along the old lanes once  
more.

## 5

<sup>13</sup> O male and female!

O the presence of women ! (I swear there is nothing more exquisite to me than the mere presence of women ;)

O for the girl, my mate ! O for the happiness with my mate !

O the young man as I pass ! O I am sick after the friendship of him who, I fear, is indifferent to me.

<sup>14</sup> O the streets of cities !

The flitting faces—the expressions, eyes, feet, costumes !

O I cannot tell how welcome they are to me.

## 6

<sup>15</sup> O to have been brought up on bays, lagoons, creeks, or along the coast !

O to continue and be employ'd there all my life !

O the briny and damp smell—the shore—the salt weeds exposed at low water,

The work of fishermen—the work of the eel-fisher and clam-fisher.

<sup>16</sup> O it is I !

I come with my clam-rake and spade ! I come with my eel-spear ;

Is the tide out ? I join the group of clam-diggers on the flats,

I laugh and work with them—I joke at my work, like a mettlesome young man.

<sup>17</sup> In winter I take my eel-basket and eel-spear and travel out on foot on the ice—I have a small axe to cut holes in the ice ;

Behold me, well-clothed, going gaily, or returning in the afternoon—my brood of tough boys accompanying me,

My brood of grown and part-grown boys, who love to be with no one else so well as they love to be with me,

By day to work with me, and by night to sleep with me.



<sup>18</sup> Or, another time, in warm weather, out in a boat, to lift the lobster-pots, where they are sunk with heavy stones, (I know the buoys ;) O the sweetness of the Fifth-month morning upon the water, as I row, just before sunrise, toward the buoys ; I pull the wicker pots up slantingly—the dark green lobsters are desperate with their claws, as I take them out—I insert wooden pegs in the joints of their pincers, I go to all the places, one after another, and then row back to the shore, There, in a huge kettle of boiling water, the lobsters shall be boil'd till their color becomes scarlet.

<sup>19</sup> Or, another time, mackerel-taking, Voracious, mad for the hook, near the surface, they seem to fill the water for miles : Or, another time, fishing for rock-fish in Chesapeake Bay—I one of the brown-faced crew : Or, another time, trailing for blue-fish off Paumanok, I stand with braced body, My left foot is on the gunwale—my right arm throws the coils of slender rope, In sight around me the quick veering and darting of fifty skiffs, my companions.

## 7

<sup>20</sup> O boating on the rivers ! The voyage down the Niagara, (the St. Lawrence,)—the superb scenery—the steamers, The ships sailing—the Thousand Islands—the occasional timber-raft, and the raftsmen with long-reaching sweep-oars, The little huts on the rafts, and the stream of smoke when they cook supper at evening.

<sup>21</sup> O something pernicious and dread ! Something far away from a puny and pious life ! Something unproved ! Something in a trance !

Something escaped from the anchorage, and driving free.

<sup>22</sup> O to work in mines, or forging iron!  
 Foundry casting—the foundry itself—the rude high  
     roof—the ample and shadow'd space,  
 The furnace—the hot liquid pour'd out and running.

## 8

<sup>23</sup> O to resume the joys of the soldier :  
 To feel the presence of a brave general! to feel his sym-  
     pathy!  
 To behold his calmness! to be warm'd in the rays of his  
     smile!  
 To go to battle! to hear the bugles play, and the drums  
     beat!  
 To hear the crash of artillery! to see the glittering of  
     the bayonets and musket-barrels in the sun!  
 To see men fall and die, and not complain!  
 To taste the savage taste of blood! to be so devilish!  
 To gloat so over the wounds and deaths of the enemy.

## 9

<sup>24</sup> O the whaleman's joys! O I cruise my old cruise  
     again!  
 I feel the ship's motion under me—I feel the Atlantic  
     breezes fanning me,  
 I hear the cry again sent down from the mast-head—  
     *There—she blows!*  
 —Again I spring up the rigging, to look with the rest  
     —We see—we descend, wild with excitement,  
 I leap in the lower'd boat—We row toward our prey,  
     where he lies,  
 We approach, stealthy and silent—I see the mountain-  
     ous mass, lethargic, basking,  
 I see the harpooneer standing up—I see the weapon  
     dart from his vigorous arm :  
 O swift, again, now, far out in the ocean, the wounded  
     whale, settling, running to windward, tows me ;

—Again I see him rise to breathe—We row close  
 again,  
 I see a lance driven through his side, press'd deep,  
 turn'd in the wound,  
 Again we back off—I see him settle again—the life is  
 leaving him fast,  
 As he rises, he spouts blood—I see him swim in circles  
 narrower and narrower, swiftly cutting the water  
 —I see him die ;  
 He gives one convulsive leap in the centre of the circle,  
 and then falls flat and still in the bloody foam.

## 10

<sup>25</sup> O the old manhood of me, my joy!  
 My children and grand-children—my white hair and  
 beard,  
 My largeness, calmness, majesty, out of the long stretch  
 of my life.

<sup>26</sup> O the ripen'd joy of womanhood!  
 O perfect happiness at last!  
 I am more than eighty years of age—my hair, too, is  
 pure white—I am the most venerable mother ;  
 How clear is my mind ! how all people draw nigh to  
 me!  
 What attractions are these, beyond any before ? what  
 bloom, more than the bloom of youth ?  
 What beauty is this that descends upon me, and rises  
 out of me ?

<sup>27</sup> O the orator's joys !  
 To inflate the chest—to roll the thunder of the voice  
 out from the ribs and throat,  
 To make the people rage, weep, hate, desire, with your-  
 self,  
 To lead America—to quell America with a great tongue.

<sup>28</sup> O the joy of my soul leaning pois'd on itself—receiv-  
 ing identity through materials, and loving them  
 —observing characters, and absorbing them ;

O my soul, vibrated back to me, from them—from  
facts, sight, hearing, touch, my phrenology,  
reason, articulation, comparison, memory, and  
the like ;

The real life of my senses and flesh, transcending my  
senses and flesh ;

My body, done with materials—my sight, done with  
my material eyes ;

Proved to me this day, beyond cavil, that it is not my  
material eyes which finally see,

Nor my material body which finally loves, walks, laughs,  
shouts, embraces, procreates.

## 11

<sup>29</sup> O the farmer's joys !

Ohioan's, Illinoisian's, Wisconsinese', Kanadian's, Io-  
wan's, Kansian's, Missourian's, Oregonese' joys ;

To rise at peep of day, and pass forth nimbly to work,

To plow land in the fall for winter-sown crops,

To plough land in the spring for maize,

To train orchards—to graft the trees—to gather apples  
in the fall.

<sup>30</sup> O the pleasure with trees !

The orchard—the forest—the oak, cedar, pine, pekan-  
tree,

The honey-locust, black-walnut, cottonwood, and mag-  
nolia.

## 12

<sup>31</sup> O Death ! the voyage of Death !

The beautiful touch of Death, soothing and benumbing  
a few moments, for reasons ;

Myself, discharging my excrementitious body, to be  
burn'd, or render'd to powder, or buried,

My real body doubtless left to me for other spheres,

My voided body, nothing more to me, returning to the  
purifications, further offices, eternal uses of the  
earth.

## 13

<sup>32</sup> O to bathe in the swimming-bath, or in a good place  
along shore !

To splash the water ! to walk ankle-deep—to race naked  
along the shore.

<sup>33</sup> O to realize space !

The plenteousness of all—that there are no bounds ;  
To emerge, and be of the sky—of the sun and moon,  
and the flying clouds, as one with them.

<sup>34</sup> O the joy of a manly self-hood !

Personality—to be servile to none—to defer to none—  
not to any tyrant, known or unknown,

To walk with erect carriage, a step springy and elastic,  
To look with calm gaze, or with a flashing eye,

To speak with a full and sonorous voice, out of a broad  
chest,

To confront with your personality all the other person-  
alities of the earth.

## 14

<sup>35</sup> Know'st thou the excellent joys of youth ?

Joys of the dear companions, and of the merry word,  
and laughing face ?

Joys of the glad, light-beaming day—joy of the wide-  
breath'd games ?

Joy of sweet music—joy of the lighted ball-room, and  
the dancers ?

Joy of the friendly, plenteous dinner—the strong  
carouse, and drinking ?

## 15

<sup>36</sup> Yet, O my soul supreme !

Know'st thou the joys of pensive thought ?

Joys of the free and lonesome heart—the tender,  
gloomy heart ?

Joy of the solitary walk—the spirit bowed yet proud—  
the suffering and the struggle ?



The agonistic throes, the extasies—joys of the solemn  
 musings, day or night?  
 Joys of the thought of Death—the great spheres Time  
 and Space?  
 Prophetic joys of better, loftier love's ideals—the Di-  
 vine Wife—the sweet, eternal, perfect Comrade?  
 Joys all thine own, undying one—joys worthy thee, O  
 Soul.

## 16

<sup>37</sup> O, while I live, to be the ruler of life—not a slave,  
 To meet life as a powerful conqueror,  
 No fumes—no ennui—no more complaints, or scornful  
 criticisms.

<sup>38</sup> O me repellent and ugly!  
 To these proud laws of the air, the water, and the  
 ground, proving my interior Soul impregnable,  
 And nothing exterior shall ever take command of me.

<sup>39</sup> O to attract by more than attraction!  
 How it is I know not—yet behold! the something  
 which obeys none of the rest,  
 It is offensive, never defensive—yet how magnetic it  
 draws.

## 17

<sup>40</sup> O joy of suffering!  
 To struggle against great odds! to meet enemies un-  
 daunted!  
 To be entirely alone with them! to find how much one  
 can stand!  
 To look strife, torture, prison, popular odium, death,  
 face to face!  
 To mount the scaffold! to advance to the muzzles of  
 guns with perfect nonchalance!  
 To be indeed a God!

## 18

<sup>41</sup> O, to sail to sea in a ship!  
To leave this steady, unendurable land!  
To leave the tiresome sameness of the streets, the side-  
walks and the houses;  
To leave you, O you solid motionless land, and entering  
a ship,  
To sail, and sail, and sail!

## 19

<sup>42</sup> O to have my life henceforth a poem of new joys!  
To dance, clap hands, exult, shout, skip, leap, roll on,  
float on,  
To be a sailor of the world, bound for all ports,  
A ship itself, (see indeed these sails I spread to the sun  
and air,)  
A swift and swelling ship, full of rich words—full of  
joys.

## TO THINK OF TIME.

---

<sup>1</sup> To think of time—of all that retrospection!  
To think of to-day, and the ages continued hencefor-  
ward!

<sup>2</sup> Have you guess'd you yourself would not continue?  
Have you dreaded these earth-beetles?  
Have you fear'd the future would be nothing to you?

<sup>3</sup> Is to-day nothing? Is the beginningless past noth-  
ing?  
If the future is nothing, they are just as surely nothing.

<sup>4</sup> To think that the sun rose in the east! that men and  
women were flexible, real, alive! that everything  
was alive!  
To think that you and I did not see, feel, think, nor  
bear our part!  
To think that we are now here, and bear our part!

### 2

<sup>5</sup> Not a day passes—not a minute or second, without an  
accouchement!  
Not a day passes—not a minute or second, without a  
corpse!

<sup>6</sup> The dull nights go over, and the dull days also,  
The soreness of lying so much in bed goes over,  
The physician, after long putting off, gives the silent  
and terrible look for an answer,

The children come hurried and weeping, and the brothers  
 and sisters are sent for,  
 Medicines stand unused on the shelf—(the camphor-  
 smell has long pervaded the rooms,)  
 The faithful hand of the living does not desert the hand  
 of the dying,  
 The twitching lips press lightly on the forehead of the  
 dying,  
 The breath ceases, and the pulse of the heart ceases,  
 The corpse stretches on the bed, and the living look  
 upon it,  
 It is palpable as the living are palpable.

<sup>7</sup> The living look upon the corpse with their eye-sight,  
 But without eye-sight lingers a different living, and  
 looks curiously on the corpse.

## 3

<sup>8</sup> To think the thought of Death, merged in the thought  
 of materials!

To think that the rivers will flow, and the snow fall,  
 and fruits ripen, and act upon others as upon us  
 now—yet not act upon us!

To think of all these wonders of city and country, and  
 others taking great interest in them—and we  
 taking no interest in them!

<sup>9</sup> To think how eager we are in building our houses!  
 To think others shall be just as eager, and we quite  
 indifferent!

<sup>10</sup> (I see one building the house that serves him a few  
 years, or seventy or eighty years at most,  
 I see one building the house that serves him longer  
 than that.)

<sup>11</sup> Slow-moving and black lines creep over the whole  
 earth—they never cease—they are the burial  
 lines,  
 He that was President was buried, and he that is now  
 President shall surely be buried.

## 4

- <sup>12</sup> A reminiscence of the vulgar fate,  
 A frequent sample of the life and death of workmen,  
 Each after his kind :  
 Cold dash of waves at the ferry-wharf—posh and ice in  
     the river, half-frozen mud in the streets, a gray  
     discouraged sky overhead, the short last daylight  
     of Twelfth-month,  
 A hearse and stages—other vehicles give place—the  
     funeral of an old Broadway stage-driver, the  
     cortege mostly drivers.
- <sup>13</sup> Steady the trot to the cemetery, duly rattles the  
     death-bell, the gate is pass'd, the new-dug grave  
     is halted at, the living alight, the hearse uncloses,  
 The coffin is pass'd out, lower'd and settled, the whip is  
     laid on the coffin, the earth is swiftly shovel'd in,  
 The mound above is flatted with the spades—silence,  
 A minute—no one moves or speaks—it is done,  
 He is decently put away—is there anything more ?
- <sup>14</sup> He was a good fellow, free-mouth'd, quick-temper'd,  
     not bad-looking, able to take his own part, witty,  
     sensitive to a slight, ready with life or death for  
     a friend, fond of women, gambled, ate hearty,  
     drank hearty, had known what it was to be flush,  
     grew low-spirited toward the last, sicken'd, was  
     help'd by a contribution, died, aged forty-one  
     years—and that was his funeral.
- <sup>15</sup> Thumb extended, finger uplifted, apron, cape, gloves,  
     strap, wet-weather clothes, whip carefully chosen,  
     boss, spotter, starter, hostler, somebody loafing  
     on you, you loafing on somebody, headway, man  
     before and man behind, good day's work, bad  
     day's work, pet stock, mean stock, first out, last  
     out, turning-in at night ;  
 To think that these are so much and so nigh to other  
     drivers—and he there takes no interest in them !



## 5

<sup>16</sup> The markets, the government, the working-man's wages—to think what account they are through our nights and days!

To think that other working-men will make just as great account of them—yet we make little or no account!

<sup>17</sup> The vulgar and the refined—what you call sin, and what you call goodness—to think how wide a difference!

To think the difference will still continue to others, yet we lie beyond the difference.

<sup>18</sup> To think how much pleasure there is!

Have you pleasure from looking at the sky? have you pleasure from poems?

Do you enjoy yourself in the city? or engaged in business? or planning a nomination and election? or with your wife and family?

Or with your mother and sisters? or in womanly housework? or the beautiful maternal cares?

—These also flow onward to others—you and I flow onward,

But in due time, you and I shall take less interest in them.

<sup>19</sup> Your farm, profits, crops,—to think how engross'd you are!

To think there will still be farms, profits, crops—yet for you, of what avail?

## 6

<sup>20</sup> What will be, will be well—for what is, is well,  
To take interest is well, and not to take interest shall be well.

<sup>21</sup> The sky continues beautiful,  
The pleasure of men with women shall never be sated,  
nor the pleasure of women with men, nor the pleasure from poems,

The domestic joys, the daily housework or business, the building of houses—these are not phantasms—they have weight, form, location ;

Farms, profits, crops, markets, wages, government, are none of them phantasms,

The difference between sin and goodness is no delusion, The earth is not an echo—man and his life, and all the things of his life, are well-consider'd.

<sup>22</sup> You are not thrown to the winds—you gather certainly and safely around yourself ;  
Yourself ! Yourself ! Yourself, forever and ever !

## 7

<sup>23</sup> It is not to diffuse you that you were born of your mother and father—it is to identify you ;

It is not that you should be undecided, but that you should be decided ;

Something long preparing and formless is arrived and form'd in you,

You are henceforth secure, whatever comes or goes.

<sup>24</sup> The threads that were spun are gather'd, the weft crosses the warp, the pattern is systematic.

<sup>25</sup> The preparations have every one been justified,  
The orchestra have sufficiently tuned their instruments  
—the baton has given the signal.

<sup>26</sup> The guest that was coming—he waited long, for reasons—he is now housed,  
He is one of those who are beautiful and happy—he is one of those that to look upon and be with is enough.

<sup>27</sup> The law of the past cannot be eluded,  
The law of the present and future cannot be eluded,  
The law of the living cannot be eluded—it is eternal,  
The law of promotion and transformation cannot be eluded,

The law of heroes and good-doers cannot be eluded,  
 The law of drunkards, informers, mean persons—not  
 one iota thereof can be eluded.

## 8

<sup>28</sup> Slow moving and black lines go ceaselessly over the  
 earth,

Northerner goes carried, and Southerner goes carried,  
 and they on the Atlantic side, and they on the  
 Pacific, and they between, and all through the  
 Mississippi country, and all over the earth.

<sup>29</sup> The great masters and kosmos are well as they go—  
 the heroes and good-doers are well,  
 The known leaders and inventors, and the rich owners  
 and pious and distinguish'd, may be well,  
 But there is more account than that—there is strict  
 account of all.

<sup>30</sup> The interminable hordes of the ignorant and wicked  
 are not nothing,  
 The barbarians of Africa and Asia are not nothing,  
 The common people of Europe are not nothing—the  
 American aborigines are not nothing,  
 The infected in the immigrant hospital are not nothing  
 —the murderer or mean person is not nothing,  
 The perpetual successions of shallow people are not  
 nothing as they go,  
 The lowest prostitute is not nothing—the mocker of  
 religion is not nothing as he goes.

## 9

<sup>31</sup> Of and in all these things,  
 I have dream'd that we are not to be changed so much,  
 nor the law of us changed,  
 I have dream'd that heroes and good-doers shall be  
 under the present and past law,  
 And that murderers, drunkards, liars, shall be under  
 the present and past law,  
 For I have dream'd that the law they are under now is  
 enough.

<sup>32</sup> If otherwise, all came but to ashes of dung,  
If maggots and rats ended us, then Alarum! for we are  
betray'd!  
Then indeed suspicion of death.

<sup>33</sup> Do you suspect death? If I were to suspect death, I  
should die now,  
Do you think I could walk pleasantly and well-suited  
toward annihilation?

## 10

<sup>34</sup> Pleasantly and well-suited I walk,  
Whither I walk I cannot define, but I know it is good,  
The whole universe indicates that it is good,  
The past and the present indicate that it is good.

<sup>35</sup> How beautiful and perfect are the animals!  
How perfect the earth, and the minutest thing upon it!  
What is called good is perfect, and what is called bad is  
just as perfect,  
The vegetables and minerals are all perfect, and the  
imponderable fluids are perfect;  
Slowly and surely they have pass'd on to this, and  
slowly and surely they yet pass on.

## 11

<sup>36</sup> I swear I think now that everything without excep-  
tion has an eternal Soul!  
The trees have, rooted in the ground! the weeds of the  
sea have! the animals!

<sup>37</sup> I swear I think there is nothing but immortality!  
That the exquisite scheme is for it, and the nebulous  
float is for it, and the cohering is for it;  
And all preparation is for it! and identity is for it! and  
life and materials are altogether for it!

## CHANTING THE SQUARE DEIFIC.

## 1

CHANTING the square deific, out of the One advancing,  
     out of the sides ;  
 Out of the old and new—out of the square entirely  
     divine,  
 Solid, four-sided, (all the sides needed)...from this  
     side JEHOVAH am I,  
 Old Brahm I, and I Saturnius am ;  
 Not Time affects me—I am Time, old, modern as any ;  
 Unpersuadable, relentless, executing righteous judg-  
     ments ;  
 As the Earth, the Father, the brown old Kronos, with  
     laws,  
 Aged beyond computation—yet ever new—ever with  
     those mighty laws rolling,  
 Relentless, I forgive no man—whoever sins, dies—I will  
     have that man's life ;  
 Therefore let none expect mercy—Have the seasons,  
     gravitation, the appointed days, mercy?—No  
     more have I ;  
 But as the seasons, and gravitation—and as all the  
     appointed days, that forgive not,  
 I dispense from this side judgments inexorable, without  
     the least remorse.

## 2

Consolator most mild, the promis'd one advancing,  
 With gentle hand extended—the mightier God am I,  
 Foretold by prophets and poets, in their most rapt  
     prophecies and poems ;  
 From this side, lo ! the Lord CHRIST gazes—lo ! Hermes  
     I—lo ! mine is Hercules' face ;  
 All sorrow, labor, suffering, I, tallying it, absorb in my-  
     self ;  
 Many times have I been rejected, taunted, put in prison,  
     and crucified—and many times shall be again ;



All the world have I given up for my dear brothers'  
 and sisters' sake—for the soul's sake ;  
 Wending my way through the homes of men, rich or  
 poor, with the kiss of affection ;  
 For I am affection—I am the cheer-bringing God, with  
 hope, and all-enclosing Charity ;  
 (Conqueror yet—for before me all the armies and sol-  
 diers of the earth shall yet bow—and all the  
 weapons of war become impotent :)  
 With indulgent words, as to children—with fresh and  
 sane words, mine only ;  
 Young and strong I pass, knowing well I am destin'd  
 myself to an early death :  
 But my Charity has no death—my Wisdom dies not,  
 neither early nor late,  
 And my sweet Love, bequeath'd here and elsewhere,  
 never dies.

3

Aloof, dissatisfied, plotting revolt,  
 Comrade of criminals, brother of slaves,  
 Crafty, despised, a drudge, ignorant,  
 With sudra face and worn brow, black, but in the depths  
 of my heart, proud as any ;  
 Lifted, now and always, against whoever, scorning,  
 assumes to rule me ;  
 Morose, full of guile, full of reminiscences, brooding,  
 with many wiles,  
 (Though it was thought I was baffled and dispell'd,  
 and my wiles done—but that will never be ;)  
 Defiant, I, SATAN, still live—still utter words—in new  
 lands duly appearing, (and old ones also ;)  
 Permanent here, from my side, warlike, equal with any,  
 real as any,  
 Nor time, nor change, shall ever change me or my words.

4

Santa SPIRITA, breather, life,  
 Beyond the light, lighter than light,

Beyond the flames of hell—joyous, leaping easily above  
hell ;  
Beyond Paradise—perfumed solely with mine own  
perfume ;  
Including all life on earth—touching, including God—  
including Saviour and Satan ;  
Ethereal, pervading all, (for without me, what were all ?  
what were God ?)  
Essence of forms—life of the real identities, permanent,  
positive, (namely the unseen,)  
Life of the great round world, the sun and stars, and of  
man—I, the general Soul,  
Here the square finishing, the solid, I the most solid,  
Breathe my breath also through these songs.

# WHISPERS OF HEAVENLY DEATH.

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## WHISPERS OF HEAVENLY DEATH.

<sup>1</sup> WHISPERS of heavenly death, murmur'd I hear ;  
Labial gossip of night—sibilant chorals ;  
Footsteps gently ascending—mystical breezes, wafted  
    soft and low ;  
Ripples of unseen rivers—tides of a current, flowing,  
    forever flowing ;  
(Or is it the plashing of tears ? the measureless waters  
    of human tears ?)

<sup>2</sup> I see, just see, skyward, great cloud-masses ;  
Mournfully, slowly they roll, silently swelling and mix-  
    ing ;  
With, at times, a half-dimm'd, sadden'd, far-off star,  
Appearing and disappearing.

<sup>3</sup> (Some parturition, rather—some solemn, immortal  
    birth :  
On the frontiers, to eyes impenetrable,  
Some Soul is passing over.)

## DAREST THOU NOW, O SOUL.

1

DAREST thou now, O Soul,  
Walk out with me toward the Unknown Region,  
Where neither ground is for the feet, nor any path to  
follow?

2

No map, there, nor guide,  
Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand,  
Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor eyes, are in  
that land.

3

I know it not, O Soul ;  
Nor dost thou—all is a blank before us ;  
All waits, undream'd of, in that region—that inaccessible  
land.

4

Till, when the ties loosen,  
All but the ties eternal, Time and Space,  
Nor darkness, gravitation, sense, nor any bounds, bound  
us.

5

Then we burst forth—we float,  
In Time and Space, O Soul—prepared for them ;  
Equal, equipt at last—(O joy! O fruit of all!) them to  
fulfil, O Soul.



## OF HIM I LOVE DAY AND NIGHT.

OF him I love day and night, I dream'd I heard he was  
dead ;  
And I dream'd I went where they had buried him I  
love—but he was not in that place ;  
And I dream'd I wander'd, searching among burial-  
places, to find him ;

And I found that every place was a burial place ;  
The houses full of life were equally full of death, (this  
house is now ;)  
The streets, the shipping, the places of amusement, the  
Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, the Mannahatta,  
were as full of the dead as of the living,  
And fuller, O vastly fuller, of the dead than of the  
living ;  
—And what I dream'd I will henceforth tell to every  
person and age,  
And I stand henceforth bound to what I dream'd ;  
And now I am willing to disregard burial-places, and  
dispense with them ;  
And if the memorials of the dead were put up indiffer-  
ently everywhere, even in the room where I eat  
or sleep, I should be satisfied ;  
And if the corpse of any one I love, or if my own corpse,  
be duly render'd to powder, and pour'd in the  
sea, I shall be satisfied ;  
Or if it be distributed to the winds, I shall be satisfied.

---

## ASSURANCES.

I NEED no assurances—I am a man who is preoccupied,  
of his own Soul ;  
I do not doubt that from under the feet, and beside the  
hands and face I am cognizant of, are now look-  
ing faces I am not cognizant of—calm and actual  
faces ;  
I do not doubt but the majesty and beauty of the world  
are latent in any iota of the world ;  
I do not doubt I am limitless, and that the universes  
are limitless—in vain I try to think how limitless ;  
I do not doubt that the orbs, and the systems of orbs,  
play their swift sports through the air on pur-  
pose—and that I shall one day be eligible to do  
as much as they, and more than they ;



- I do not doubt that temporary affairs keep on and on,  
millions of years ;
- I do not doubt interiors have their interiors, and exteriors have their exteriors—and that the eye-sight has another eye-sight, and the hearing another hearing, and the voice another voice ;
- I do not doubt that the passionately-wept deaths of young men are provided for—and that the deaths of young women, and the deaths of little children, are provided for ;
- (Did you think Life was so well provided for—and Death, the purport of all Life, is not well provided for ?)
- I do not doubt that wrecks at sea, no matter what the horrors of them—no matter whose wife, child, husband, father, lover, has gone down, are provided for, to the minutest points ;
- I do not doubt that whatever can possibly happen, any where, at any time, is provided for, in the inherences of things ;
- I do not think Life provides for all, and for Time and Space—but I believe Heavenly Death provides for all.



## YET, YET, YE DOWNCAST HOURS.

### 1

YET, yet, ye downcast hours, I know ye also ;  
Weights of lead, how ye clog and cling at my ankles !  
Earth to a chamber of mourning turns—I hear the  
o'erweening, mocking voice,  
*Matter is conqueror—matter, triumphant only, continues  
onward.*

### 2

Despairing cries float ceaselessly toward me,  
The call of my nearest lover, putting forth, alarm'd,  
uncertain,

*The Sea I am quickly to sail, come tell me,  
Come tell me where I am speeding—tell me my destination.*

## 3

I understand your anguish, but I cannot help you,  
I approach, hear, behold—the sad mouth, the look out  
of the eyes, your mute inquiry,  
*Whither I go from the bed I recline on, come tell me :*  
Old age, alarm'd, uncertain—A young woman's voice,  
appealing to me for comfort ;  
A young man's voice, *Shall I not escape ?*

## QUICKSAND YEARS.

QUICKSAND years that whirl me I know not whither,  
Your schemes, politics, fail—lines give way—substances  
mock and elude me ;  
Only the theme I sing, the great and strong-possess'd  
Soul, eludes not ;  
One's-self must never give way—that is the final sub-  
stance—that out of all is sure ;  
Out of politics, triumphs, battles, life—what at last  
finally remains ?  
When shows break up, what but One's-Self is sure ?

## THAT MUSIC ALWAYS ROUND ME.

THAT music always round me, unceasing, unbeginning  
—yet long untaught I did not hear ;  
But now the chorus I hear, and am elated ;  
A tenor, strong, ascending, with power and health, with  
glad notes of day-break I hear,  
A soprano, at intervals, sailing buoyantly over the tops  
of immense waves,

A transparent base, shuddering lusciously under and  
through the universe,  
The triumphant tutti—the funeral wailings, with sweet  
flutes and violins—all these I fill myself with ;  
I hear not the volumes of sound merely—I am moved  
by the exquisite meanings,  
I listen to the different voices winding in and out,  
striving, contending with fiery vehemence to  
excel each other in emotion ;  
I do not think the performers know themselves—but  
now I think I begin to know them.

---

#### AS IF A PHANTOM CARESS'D ME.

As if a phantom caress'd me,  
I thought I was not alone, walking here by the shore ;  
But the one I thought was with me, as now I walk by  
the shore—the one I loved, that caress'd me,  
As I lean and look through the glimmering light—that  
one has utterly disappear'd,  
And those appear that are hateful to me, and mock me.

---

#### HERE, SAILOR !

WHAT ship, puzzled at sea, cons for the true reckon-  
ing?  
Or, coming in, to avoid the bars, and follow the chan-  
nel, a perfect pilot needs?  
Here, sailor ! Here, ship ! take aboard the most perfect  
pilot,  
Whom, in a little boat, putting off, and rowing, I,  
hailing you, offer.

## A NOISELESS, PATIENT SPIDER.

<sup>1</sup> A NOISELESS patient spider,  
I mark'd, where, on a little promontory, it stood,  
isolated ;  
Mark'd how, to explore the vacant, vast surrounding,  
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of  
itself ;  
Ever unreeling them—ever tirelessly speeding them.

<sup>2</sup> And you, O my Soul, where you stand,  
Surrounded, surrounded, in measureless oceans of  
space,  
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing,—seeking the  
spheres, to connect them ;  
Till the bridge you will need, be form'd—till the ductile  
anchor hold ;  
Till the gossamer thread you fling, catch somewhere,  
O my Soul.

---

## THE LAST INVOCATION.

1

At the last, tenderly,  
From the walls of the powerful, fortress'd house,  
From the clasp of the knitted locks—from the keep of  
the well-closed doors,  
Let me be wafted.

2

Let me glide noiselessly forth ;  
With the key of softness unlock the locks—with a  
whisper,  
Set ope the doors, O Soul !

3

Tenderly ! be not impatient !  
(Strong is your hold, O mortal flesh !  
Strong is your hold, O love.)

AS I WATCH'D THE PLOUGHMAN PLOUGH-  
ING.

As I watch'd the ploughman ploughing,  
Or the sower sowing in the fields—or the harvester  
harvesting,  
I saw there too, O life and death, your analogies :  
(Life, life is the tillage, and Death is the harvest accord-  
ing.)

---

## PENSIVE AND FALTERING.

PENSIVE and faltering,  
The words, *the dead*, I write ;  
For living are the Dead ;  
(Haply the only living, only real,  
And I the apparition—I the spectre.)



## SEA-SHORE MEMORIES.

### OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING.

1

<sup>1</sup> Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,  
Out of the mocking-bird's throat, the musical shuttle,  
Out of the Ninth-month midnight,  
Over the sterile sands, and the fields beyond, where the  
    child, leaving his bed, wander'd alone, bare-  
    headed, barefoot,  
Down from the shower'd halo,  
Up from the mystic play of shadows, twining and twist-  
    ing as if they were alive,  
Out from the patches of briars and blackberries,  
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,  
From your memories, sad brother—from the fitful  
    risings and fallings I heard,  
From under that yellow half-moon, late-risen, and  
    swollen as if with tears,  
From those beginning notes of sickness and love, there  
    in the transparent mist,  
From the thousand responses of my heart, never to  
    cease,  
From the myriad thence-arous'd words,  
From the word stronger and more delicious than any,  
From such, as now they start, the scene revisiting,  
As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,  
Borne hither—ere all eludes me, hurriedly,  
A man—yet by these tears a little boy again,

Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,  
 I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter,  
 Taking all hints to use them—but swiftly leaping  
     beyond them,  
 A reminiscence sing.

## 2

<sup>2</sup> Once, Paumanok,  
 When the snows had melted—when the lilac-scent was  
     in the air, and the Fifth-month grass was  
     growing,  
 Up this sea-shore, in some briers,  
 Two guests from Alabama—two together,  
 And their nest, and four light-green eggs, spotted with  
     brown,  
 And every day the he-bird, to and fro, near at hand,  
 And every day the she-bird, crouch'd on her nest, silent,  
     with bright eyes,  
 And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never  
     disturbing them,  
 Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

## 3

<sup>3</sup> *Shine! shine! shine!*  
*Pour down your warmth, great Sun!*  
*While we bask—we two together.*

<sup>4</sup> *Two together!*  
*Winds blow South, or winds blow North,*  
*Day come white, or night come black,*  
*Home, or rivers and mountains from home,*  
*Singing all time, minding no time,*  
*While we two keep together.*

## 4

<sup>5</sup> Till of a sudden,  
 May-be kill'd, unknown to her mate,  
 One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,  
 Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next,  
 Nor ever appear'd again.

<sup>6</sup> And thenceforward, all summer, in the sound of the  
     sea,  
 And at night, under the full of the moon, in calmer  
     weather,  
 Over the hoarse surging of the sea,  
 Or fitting from brier to brier by day,  
 I saw, I heard at intervals, the remaining one, the he-  
     bird,  
 The solitary guest from Alabama.

## 5

<sup>7</sup> *Blow! blow! blow!*  
*Blow up, sea-winds, along Paumanok's shore!*  
*I wait and I wait, till you blow my mate to me.*

## 6

<sup>8</sup> Yes, when the stars glisten'd,  
 All night long, on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake,  
 Down, almost amid the slapping waves,  
 Sat the lone singer, wonderful, causing tears.

<sup>9</sup> He call'd on his mate ;  
 He pour'd forth the meanings which I, of all men, know.

<sup>10</sup> Yes, my brother, I know ;  
 The rest might not—but I have treasur'd every note ;  
 For once, and more than once, dimly, down to the  
     beach gliding,  
 Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with  
     the shadows,  
 Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the  
     sounds and sights after their sorts,  
 The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,  
 I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,  
 Listen'd long and long.

<sup>11</sup> Listen'd, to keep, to sing—now translating the notes,  
 Following you, my brother.

<sup>12</sup> *Soothe ! soothe ! soothe !*

*Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,  
And again another behind, embracing and lapping, every  
one close,  
But my love soothes not me, not me.*

<sup>13</sup> *Low hangs the moon—it rose late ;*

*O it is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love, with love.*

<sup>14</sup> *O madly the sea pushes, pushes upon the land,*

*With love—with love.*

<sup>15</sup> *O night ! do I not see my love fluttering out there among  
the breakers ?*

*What is that little black thing I see there in the white ?*

<sup>16</sup> *Loud ! loud ! loud !*

*Loud I call to you, my love !*

*High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves ;*

*Surely you must know who is here, is here ;*

*You must know who I am, my love.*

<sup>17</sup> *Low-hanging moon !*

*What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow ?*

*O it is the shape, the shape of my mate !*

*O moon, do not keep her from me any longer.*

<sup>18</sup> *Land ! land ! O land !*

*Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my  
mate back again, if you only would ;*

*For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.*

<sup>19</sup> *O rising stars !*

*Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with  
some of you.*

<sup>20</sup> *O throat ! O trembling throat !*

*Sound clearer through the atmosphere !*

*Pierce the woods, the earth ;*

*Somewhere listening to catch you, must be the one I want.*

<sup>21</sup> *Shake out, carols !  
Solitary here—the night's carols !  
Carols of lonesome love ! Death's carols !  
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon !  
O, under that moon, where she droops almost down into the  
    sea !  
O reckless, despairing carols.*

<sup>22</sup> *But soft ! sink low ;  
Soft ! let me just murmur ;  
And do you wait a moment, you husky-noised sea ;  
For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to  
    me,  
So faint—I must be still, be still to listen ;  
But not altogether still, for then she might not come imme-  
    diately to me.*

<sup>23</sup> *Hither, my love !  
Here I am ! Here !  
With this just-sustain'd note I announce myself to you ;  
This gentle call is for you, my love, for you.*

<sup>24</sup> *Do not be decoy'd elsewhere !  
That is the whistle of the wind—it is not my voice ;  
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray ;  
Those are the shadows of leaves.*

<sup>25</sup> *O darkness ! O in vain !  
O I am very sick and sorrowful.*

<sup>26</sup> *O brown halo in the sky, near the moon, drooping upon  
    the sea !  
O troubled reflection in the sea !  
O throat ! O throbbing heart !  
O all—and I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.*

<sup>27</sup> *Yet I murmur, murmur on !  
O murmurs—you yourselves make me continue to sing, I  
    know not why.*



<sup>28</sup> *O past ! O life ! O songs of joy !  
 In the air—in the woods—over fields ;  
 Loved ! loved ! loved ! loved ! loved !  
 But my love no more, no more with me !  
 We two together no more.*

## 8

<sup>29</sup> The aria sinking ;  
 All else continuing—the stars shining,  
 The winds blowing—the notes of the bird continuous  
     echoing,  
 With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly  
     moaning,  
 On the sands of Paumanok's shore, gray and rustling ;  
 The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, droop-  
     ing, the face of the sea almost touching ;  
 The boy extatic—with his bare feet the waves, with his  
     hair the atmosphere dallying,  
 The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last  
     tumultuously bursting,  
 The aria's meaning, the ears, the Soul, swiftly deposit-  
     ing,  
 The strange tears down the cheeks coursing,  
 The colloquy there—the trio—each uttering,  
 The undertone—the savage old mother, incessantly  
     crying,  
 To the boy's Soul's questions sullenly timing—some  
     drown'd secret hissing,  
 To the outsetting bard of love.

## 9

<sup>30</sup> Demon or bird ! (said the boy's soul,)  
 Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it mostly  
     to me?  
 For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping,  
 Now I have heard you,  
 Now in a moment I know what I am for—I awake,  
 And already a thousand singers—a thousand songs,  
     clearer, louder and more sorrowful than yours,

A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within  
me,  
Never to die.

<sup>31</sup> O you singer, solitary, singing by yourself—project-  
ing me ;  
O solitary me, listening—never more shall I cease per-  
petuating you ;  
Never more shall I escape, never more the reverbera-  
tions,  
Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from  
me,  
Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was  
before what there, in the night,  
By the sea, under the yellow and sagging moon,  
The messenger there arous'd—the fire, the sweet hell  
within,  
The unknown want, the destiny of me.

<sup>32</sup> O give me the clew ! (it lurks in the night here some-  
where ;)  
O if I am to have so much, let me have more !  
O a word ! O what is my destination ? (I fear it is hence-  
forth chaos ;)  
O how joys, dreads, convolutions, human shapes, and all  
shapes, spring as from graves around me !  
O phantoms ! you cover all the land and all the sea !  
O I cannot see in the dimness whether you smile or  
frown upon me ;  
O vapor, a look, a word ! O well-beloved !  
O you dear women's and men's phantoms !

<sup>33</sup> A word then, (for I will conquer it,)  
The word final, superior to all,  
Subtle, sent up—what is it ?—I listen ;  
Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you  
sea-waves ?  
Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands ?

## 10

<sup>34</sup> Whereto answering, the sea,  
 Delaying not, hurrying not,  
 Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly be-  
     fore daybreak,  
 Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word DEATH ;  
 And again Death—ever Death, Death, Death,  
 Hissing melodious, neither like the bird, nor like my  
     arous'd child's heart,  
 But edging near, as privately for me, rustling at my  
     feet,  
 Creeping thence steadily up to my ears, and laving me  
     softly all over,  
 Death, Death, Death, Death, Death.

<sup>35</sup> Which I do not forget,  
 But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother, .  
 That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's  
     gray beach,  
 With the thousand responsive songs, at random,  
 My own songs, awaked from that hour ;  
 And with them the key, the word up from the waves,  
 The word of the sweetest song, and all songs,  
 That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my  
     feet,  
 The sea whisper'd me.

—♦—

 ELEMENTAL DRIFTS.

## 1

<sup>1</sup> ELEMENTAL drifts !  
 How I wish I could impress others as you have just  
     — been impressing me !

<sup>2</sup> As I ebb'd with an ebb of the ocean of life,  
 As I wended the shores I know,

As I walk'd where the ripples continually wash you,  
Paumanok,  
Where they rustle up, hoarse and sibilant,  
Where the fierce old mother endlessly cries for her  
castaways,  
I, musing, late in the autumn day, gazing off south-  
ward,  
Alone, held by this eternal Self of me, out of the pride  
of which I utter my poems,  
Was seiz'd by the spirit that trails in the lines under-  
foot,  
In the rim, the sediment, that stands for all the water  
and all the land of the globe.

<sup>3</sup> Fascinated, my eyes, reverting from the south, dropt,  
to follow those slender winrows,  
Chaff, straw, splinters of wood, weeds, and the sea-  
gluten,  
Scum, scales from shining rocks, leaves of salt-lettuce,  
left by the tide :  
Miles walking, the sound of breaking waves the other  
side of me,  
Paumanok, there and then, as I thought the old  
thought of likenesses,  
These you presented to me, you fish-shaped island,  
As I wended the shores I know,  
As I walk'd with that eternal Self of me, seeking types.

## 2

<sup>4</sup> As I wend to the shores I know not,  
As I list to the dirge, the voices of men and women  
wreck'd,  
As I inhale the impalpable breezes that set in upon  
me,  
As the ocean so mysterious rolls toward me closer and  
closer,  
too, but signify, at the utmost, a little wash'd-up  
drift,  
A few sands and dead leaves to gather,  
Gather, and merge myself as part of the sands and  
drift.

<sup>5</sup> O baffled, balk'd, bent to the very earth,  
Oppress'd with myself that I have dared to open my  
mouth,  
Aware now, that, amid all that blab whose echoes recoil  
upon me, I have not once had the least idea  
who or what I am,  
But that before all my insolent poems the real Me  
stands yet untouch'd, untold, altogether un-  
reach'd,  
Withdrawn far, mocking me with mock-congratulatory  
signs and bows,  
With peals of distant ironical laughter at every word I  
have written,  
Pointing in silence to these songs, and then to the sand  
beneath.

<sup>6</sup> Now I perceive I have not understood anything—not  
a single object—and that no man ever can.

<sup>7</sup> I perceive Nature, here in sight of the sea, is taking  
advantage of me, to dart upon me, and sting me,  
Because I have dared to open my mouth to sing at all.

## 3

<sup>8</sup> You oceans both! I close with you;  
We murmur alike reproachfully, rolling our sands and  
drift, knowing not why,  
These little shreds indeed, standing for you and me  
and all.

<sup>9</sup> You friable shore, with trails of debris!  
You fish-shaped island! I take what is underfoot;  
What is yours is mine, my father.

<sup>10</sup> I too Paumanok,  
I too have bubbled up, floated the measureless float,  
and been wash'd on your shores;  
I too am but a trail of drift and debris,  
I too leave little wrecks upon you, you fish-shaped  
island.



<sup>11</sup> I throw myself upon your breast, my father,  
I cling to you so that you cannot unloose me,  
I hold you so firm, till you answer me something.

<sup>12</sup> Kiss me, my father,  
Touch me with your lips, as I touch those I love,  
Breathe to me, while I hold you close, the secret of the  
murmuring I envy.

## 4

<sup>13</sup> Ebb, ocean of life, (the flow will return,)   
Cease not your moaning, you fierce old mother,  
Endlessly cry for your castaways—but fear not, deny  
not me,  
Rustle not up so hoarse and angry against my feet, as I  
touch you, or gather from you.

<sup>14</sup> I mean tenderly by you and all,  
I gather for myself, and for this phantom, looking down  
where we lead, and following me and mine.

<sup>15</sup> Me and mine!  
We, loose winrows, little corpses,  
Froth, snowy white, and bubbles,  
(See! from my dead lips the ooze exuding at last!  
See—the prismatic colors, glistening and rolling!)  
Tufts of straw, sands, fragments,  
Buoy'd hither from many moods, one contradicting  
another,  
From the storm, the long calm, the darkness, the swell;  
Musing, pondering, a breath, a briny tear, a dab of  
liquid or soil;  
Up just as much out of fathomless workings fermented  
and thrown;  
A limp blossom or two, torn, just as much over waves  
floating, drifted at random;  
Just as much for us that sobbing dirge of Nature;  
Just as much, whence we come, that blare of the cloud-  
trumpets;

We, capricious, brought hither, we know not whence,  
 spread out before you,  
 You, up there, walking or sitting,  
 Whoever you are—we too lie in drifts at your feet.



## TEARS.

TEARS! tears! tears!  
 In the night, in solitude, tears;  
 On the white shore dripping, dripping, suck'd in by the  
 sand;  
 Tears—not a star shining—all dark and desolate;  
 Moist tears from the eyes of a muffled head:  
 —O who is that ghost?—that form in the dark, with  
 tears?  
 What shapeless lump is that, bent, crouch'd there on  
 the sand?  
 Streaming tears—sobbing tears—throes, choked with  
 wild cries;  
 O storm, embodied, rising, careering, with swift steps  
 along the beach;  
 O wild and dismal night storm, with wind! O belching  
 and desperate!  
 O shade, so sedate and decorous by day, with calm  
 countenance and regulated pace;  
 But away, at night, as you fly, none looking—O then  
 the unloosen'd ocean,  
 Of tears! tears! tears!



## ABOARD, AT A SHIP'S HELM.

<sup>1</sup> ABOARD, at a ship's helm,  
 A young steersman, steering with care.

<sup>2</sup> A bell through fog on a sea-coast dolefully ringing,  
 An ocean-bell—O a warning bell, rock'd by the waves.

<sup>3</sup> O you give good notice indeed, you bell by the sea-  
reefs ringing,  
Ringing, ringing, to warn the ship from its wreck-place.

<sup>4</sup> For, as on the alert, O steersman, you mind the bell's  
admonition,  
The bows turn,—the freighted ship, tacking, speeds  
away under her gray sails,  
The beautiful and noble ship, with all her precious  
wealth, speeds away gaily and safe.

<sup>5</sup> But O the ship, the immortal ship! O ship aboard the  
ship!  
O ship of the body—ship of the soul—voyaging, voyag-  
ing, voyaging.



## ON THE BEACH, AT NIGHT.

### 1

<sup>1</sup> ON the beach, at night,  
Stands a child, with her father,  
Watching the east, the autumn sky.

<sup>2</sup> Up through the darkness,  
While ravening clouds, the burial clouds, in black  
masses spreading,  
Lower, sullen and fast, athwart and down the sky,  
Amid a transparent clear belt of ether yet left in the  
east,  
Ascends, large and calm, the lord-star Jupiter ;  
And nigh at hand, only a very little above,  
Swim the delicate brothers, the Pleiades.

### 2

<sup>3</sup> From the beach, the child, holding the hand of her  
father,  
Those burial-clouds that lower, victorious, soon to de-  
vour all,  
Watching, silently weeps.

<sup>4</sup> Weep not, child,  
 Weep not, my darling,  
 With these kisses let me remove your tears ;  
 The ravening clouds shall not long be victorious,  
 They shall not long possess the sky—shall devour the  
      stars only in apparition :  
 Jupiter shall emerge—be patient—watch again another  
      night—the Pleiades shall emerge,  
 They are immortal—all those stars, both silvery and  
      golden, shall shine out again,  
 The great stars and the little ones shall shine out again  
      —they endure ;  
 The vast immortal suns, and the long-enduring pensive  
      moons, shall again shine.

## 3

<sup>5</sup> Then, dearest child, mournest thou only for Jupiter?  
 Considerest thou alone the burial of the stars?

<sup>6</sup> Something there is,  
 (With my lips soothing thee, adding, I whisper,  
 I give thee the first suggestion, the problem and indi-  
      rection,)  
 Something there is more immortal even than the stars,  
 (Many the burials, many the days and nights, passing  
      away,)  
 Something that shall endure longer even than lustrous  
      Jupiter,  
 Longer than sun, or any revolving satellite,  
 Or the radiant brothers, the Pleiades.



## THE WORLD BELOW THE BRINE.

THE world below the brine ;  
 Forests at the bottom of the sea—the branches and  
      leaves,  
 Sea-lettuce, vast lichens, strange flowers and seeds—  
      the thick tangle, the openings, and the pink turf,

Different colors, pale gray and green, purple, white,  
and gold—the play of light through the water,  
Dumb swimmers there among the rocks—coral, gluten,  
grass, rushes—and the aliment of the swimmers,  
Sluggish existences grazing there, suspended, or slowly  
crawling close to the bottom,  
The sperm-whale at the surface, blowing air and spray,  
or disporting with his flukes,  
The leaden-eyed shark, the walrus, the turtle, the hairy  
sea-leopard, and the sting-ray ;  
Passions there—wars, pursuits, tribes—sight in those  
ocean-depths—breathing that thick-breathing  
air, as so many do ;  
The change thence to the sight here, and to the subtle  
air breathed by beings like us, who walk this  
sphere ;  
The change onward from ours, to that of beings who  
walk other spheres.

---

## ON THE BEACH AT NIGHT ALONE.

<sup>1</sup> On the beach at night alone,  
As the old mother sways her to and fro, singing her  
husky song,  
As I watch the bright stars shining—I think a thought  
of the clef of the universes, and of the future.

<sup>2</sup> A VAST SIMILITUDE interlocks all,  
All spheres, grown, ungrown, small, large, suns, moons,  
planets, comets, asteroids,  
All the substances of the same, and all that is spiritual  
upon the same,  
All distances of place, however wide,  
All distances of time—all inanimate forms,  
All Souls—all living bodies, though they be ever so  
different, or in different worlds,  
All gaseous, watery, vegetable, mineral processes—the  
fishes, the brutes,



All men and women—me also ;  
All nations, colors, barbarisms, civilizations, languages ;  
All identities that have existed, or may exist, on this  
    globe, or any globe ;  
All lives and deaths—all of the past, present, future ;  
This vast similitude spans them, and always has spann'd,  
    and shall forever span them, and compactly hold  
    them, and enclose them.

# LEAVES OF GRASS.

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## A CAROL OF HARVEST, FOR 1867.

### 1

<sup>1</sup> A SONG of the good green grass!  
A song no more of the city streets;  
A song of farms—a song of the soil of fields.

<sup>2</sup> A song with the smell of sun-dried hay, where the  
nimble pitchers handle the pitch-fork;  
A song tasting of new wheat, and of fresh-husk'd maize.

### 2

<sup>3</sup> For the lands, and for these passionate days, and for  
myself,  
Now I awhile return to thee, O soil of Autumn fields,  
Reclining on thy breast, giving myself to thee,  
Answering the pulses of thy sane and equable heart,  
Tuning a verse for thee.

<sup>4</sup> O Earth, that hast no voice, confide to me a voice!  
O harvest of my lands! O boundless summer growths!  
O lavish, brown, parturient earth! O infinite, teeming  
womb!  
A verse to seek, to see, to narrate thee.

## 3

<sup>5</sup> Ever upon this stage,  
Is acted God's calm, annual drama,  
Gorgeous processions, songs of birds,  
Sunrise, that fullest feeds and freshens most the soul,  
The heaving sea, the waves upon the shore, the musical,  
    strong waves,  
The woods, the stalwart trees, the slender, tapering  
    trees,  
The flowers, the grass, the lilliput, countless armies of  
    the grass,  
The heat, the showers, the measureless pasturages,  
The scenery of the snows, the winds' free orchestra,  
The stretching, light-hung roof of clouds—the clear  
    cerulean, and the bulging, silvery fringes,  
The high dilating stars, the placid, beckoning stars,  
The moving flocks and herds, the plains and emerald  
    meadows,  
The shows of all the varied lands, and all the growths  
    and products.

## 4

<sup>6</sup> Fecund America! To day,  
Thou art all over set in births and joys!  
Thou groan'st with riches! thy wealth clothes thee as  
    with a swathing garment!  
Thou laughest loud with ache of great possessions!  
A myriad-twining life, like interlacing vines, binds all  
    thy vast demesne!  
As some huge ship, freighted to water's edge, thou  
    ridest into port!  
As rain falls from the heaven, and vapors rise from  
    earth, so have the precious values fallen upon  
    thee, and risen out of thee!  
Thou envy of the globe! thou miracle!  
Thou, bathed, choked, swimming in plenty!  
Thou lucky Mistress of the tranquil barns!  
Thou Prairie Dame that sittest in the middle, and  
    lookest out upon thy world, and lookest East,  
    and lookest West!

Dispensatress, that by a word givest a thousand miles  
—that giv'st a million farms, and missest nothing!

Thou All-Acceptress—thou Hospitable—(thou only art  
hospitable, as God is hospitable.)

## 5

<sup>7</sup> When late I sang, sad was my voice ;  
Sad were the shows around me, with deafening noises  
of hatred, and smoke of conflict ;  
In the midst of the armies, the Heroes, I stood,  
Or pass'd with slow step through the wounded and  
dying.

<sup>8</sup> But now I sing not War,  
Nor the measur'd march of soldiers, nor the tents of  
camps,  
Nor the regiments hastily coming up, deploying in line  
of battle.

<sup>9</sup> No more the dead and wounded ;  
No more the sad, unnatural shows of War.

<sup>10</sup> Ask'd room those flush'd immortal ranks ? the first  
forth-stepping armies ?  
Ask room, alas, the ghastly ranks—the armies dread  
that follow'd.

## 6

<sup>11</sup> (Pass—pass, ye proud brigades !  
So handsome, dress'd in blue—with your tramping,  
sinewy legs ;  
With your shoulders young and strong—with your  
knapsacks and your muskets ;  
—How elate I stood and watch'd you, where, starting  
off, you march'd !

<sup>12</sup> Pass ;—then rattle, drums, again !  
Scream, you steamers on the river, out of whistles loud  
and shrill, your salutes !

For an army heaves in sight—O another gathering  
 army!  
 Swarming, trailing on the rear—O you dread, accruing  
 army!  
 O you regiments so piteous, with your mortal diarrhoea!  
 with your fever!  
 O my land's maimed darlings! with the plenteous bloody  
 bandage and the crutch!  
 Lo! your pallid army follow'd!)

## 7

<sup>13</sup> But on these days of brightness,  
 On the far-stretching beauteous landscape, the roads  
 and lanes, the high-piled farm-wagons, and the  
 fruits and barns,  
 Shall the dead intrude?

<sup>14</sup> Ah, the dead to me mar not—they fit well in Na-  
 ture;  
 They fit very well in the landscape, under the trees and  
 grass,  
 And along the edge of the sky, in the horizon's far  
 margin.

<sup>15</sup> Nor do I forget you, departed;  
 Nor in winter or summer, my lost ones;  
 But most, in the open air, as now, when my soul is  
 rapt and at peace—like pleasing phantoms,  
 Your dear memories, rising, glide silently by me.

## 8

<sup>16</sup> I saw the day, the return of the Heroes;  
 (Yet the Heroes never surpass'd, shall never return;  
 Them, that day, I saw not.)

<sup>17</sup> I saw the interminable Corps—I saw the processions  
 of armies,  
 I saw them approaching, defiling by, with divisions,  
 Streaming northward, their work done, camping awhile  
 in clusters of mighty camps.



<sup>18</sup> No holiday soldiers!—youthful, yet veterans;  
 Worn, swart, handsome, strong, of the stock of home-  
 stead and workshop,  
 Harden'd of many a long campaign and sweaty march,  
 Inured on many a hard-fought, bloody field.

## 9

<sup>19</sup> A pause—the armies wait;  
 A million flush'd, embattled conquerors wait;  
 The world, too, waits—then, soft as breaking night, and  
 sure as dawn,  
 They melt—they disappear.

<sup>20</sup> Exult, indeed, O lands! victorious lands!  
 Not there your victory, on those red, shuddering fields;  
 But here and hence your victory.

<sup>21</sup> Melt, melt away, ye armies! disperse, ye blue-clad  
 soldiers!  
 Resolve ye back again—give up, for good, your deadly  
 arms;  
 Other the arms, the fields henceforth for you, or South  
 or North, or East or West,  
 With saner wars—sweet wars—life-giving wars.

## 10

<sup>22</sup> Loud, O my throat, and clear, O soul!  
 The season of thanks, and the voice of full-yielding;  
 The chant of joy and power for boundless fertility.

<sup>23</sup> All till'd and untill'd fields expand before me;  
 I see the true arenas of my race—or first, or last,  
 Man's innocent and strong arenas.

<sup>24</sup> I see the Heroes at other toils;  
 I see, well-wielded in their hands, the better weapons.

## 11

<sup>25</sup> I see where America, Mother of All,  
Well-pleased, with full-spanning eye, gazes forth, dwells  
long,  
And counts the varied gathering of the products.

<sup>26</sup> Busy the far, the sunlit panorama ;  
Prairie, orchard, and yellow grain of the North,  
Cotton and rice of the South, and Louisianian cane ;  
Open, unseeded fallows, rich fields of clover and tim-  
othy,  
Kine and horses feeding, and droves of sheep and  
swine,  
And many a stately river flowing, and many a jocund  
brook,  
And healthy uplands with their herby-perfumed breezes,  
And the good green grass—that delicate miracle, the  
ever-recurring grass.

## 12

<sup>27</sup> Toil on, Heroes ! harvest the products !  
Not alone on those warlike fields, the Mother of All,  
With dilated form and lambent eyes, watch'd you.

<sup>28</sup> Toil on, Heroes ! toil well ! Handle the weapons  
well !  
The Mother of All—yet here, as ever, she watches  
you.

<sup>29</sup> Well-pleased, America, thou beholdest,  
Over the fields of the West, those crawling monsters,  
The human-divine inventions, the labor-saving imple-  
ments :  
Beholdest, moving in every direction, imbued as with  
life, the revolving hay-rakes,  
The steam-power reaping-machines, and the horse-power  
machines,

The engines, thrashers of grain, and cleaners of grain,  
well separating the straw—the nimble work of  
the patent pitch-fork ;  
Beholdest the newer saw-mill, the southern cotton-gin,  
and the rice-cleanser.

<sup>30</sup> Beneath thy look, O Maternal,  
With these, and else, and with their own strong hands,  
the Heroes harvest.

<sup>31</sup> All gather, and all harvest ;  
(Yet but for thee, O Powerful ! not a scythe might  
swing, as now, in security ;  
Not a maize-stalk dangle, as now, its silken tassels in  
peace.)

## 13

<sup>32</sup> Under Thee only they harvest—even but a wisp of  
hay, under thy great face, only ;  
Harvest the wheat of Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin—every  
barbed spear, under thee ;  
Harvest the maize of Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee—  
each ear in its light-green sheath,  
Gather the hay to its myriad mows, in the odorous,  
tranquil barns,  
Oats to their bins—the white potato, the buckwheat of  
Michigan, to theirs ;  
Gather the cotton in Mississippi or Alabama—dig and  
hoard the golden, the sweet potato of Georgia  
and the Carolinas,  
Clip the wool of California or Pennsylvania,  
Cut the flax in the Middle States, or hemp, or tobacco  
in the Borders,  
Pick the pea and the bean, or pull apples from the  
trees, or bunches of grapes from the vines,  
Or aught that ripens in all These States, or North or  
South,  
Under the beaming sun, and under Thee.

## THE SINGER IN THE PRISON.

## 1

*O sight of shame, and pain, and dole !  
O fearful thought—a convict Soul !*

RANG the refrain along the hall, the prison,  
Rose to the roof, the vaults of heaven above,  
Pouring in floods of melody, in tones so pensive, sweet  
and strong, the like whereof was never heard,  
Reaching the far-off sentry, and the armed guards, who  
ceas'd their pacing,  
Making the hearer's pulses stop for extasy and awe.

## 2

*O sight of pity, gloom, and dole !  
O pardon me, a hapless Soul !*

The sun was low in the west one winter day,  
When down a narrow aisle, amid the thieves and out-  
laws of the land,  
(There by the hundreds seated, sear-faced murderers,  
wily counterfeitters,  
Gather'd to Sunday church in prison walls—the keep-  
ers round,  
Plenteous, well-arm'd, watching, with vigilant eyes,)  
All that dark, cankerous blotch, a nation's criminal  
mass,  
Calmly a Lady walk'd, holding a little innocent child  
by either hand,  
Whom, seating on their stools beside her on the plat-  
form,  
She, first preluding with the instrument, a low and  
musical prelude,  
In voice surpassing all, sang forth a quaint old  
hymn.

## 3

## THE HYMN.

A Soul, confined by bars and bands,  
Cries, Help ! O help ! and wrings her hands ;  
Blinded her eyes—bleeding her breast,  
Nor pardon finds, nor balm of rest.

*O sight of shame, and pain, and dole !  
O fearful thought—a convict Soul !*

Ceaseless, she paces to and fro ;  
O heart-sick days ! O nights of wo !  
Nor hand of friend, nor loving face ;  
Nor favor comes, nor word of grace,

*O sight of pity, gloom, and dole !  
O pardon me, a hapless Soul !*

It was not I that sinn'd the sin,  
The ruthless Body dragg'd me in ;  
Though long I strove courageously,  
The Body was too much for me.

*O Life ! no life, but bitter dole !  
O burning, beaten, baffled Soul !*

(Dear prison'd Soul, bear up a space,  
For soon or late the certain grace ;  
To set thee free, and bear thee home,  
The Heavenly Pardoner, Death shall come.

*Convict no more—nor shame, nor dole !  
Depart ! a God-enfranchis'd Soul !)*

## 4

The singer ceas'd ;  
One glance swept from her clear, calm eyes, o'er all  
those up-turn'd faces ;  
Strange sea of prison faces—a thousand varied, crafty,  
brutal, seam'd and beauteous faces ;



Then rising, passing back along the narrow aisle between them,  
While her gown touch'd them, rustling in the silence,  
She vanish'd with her children in the dusk.

## 5

While upon all, convicts and armed keepers, ere they stirr'd,  
(Convict forgetting prison, keeper his loaded pistol,)  
A hush and pause fell down, a wondrous minute,  
With deep, half-stifled sobs, and sound of bad men bow'd,  
and moved to weeping,  
And youth's convulsive breathings, memories of home,  
The mother's voice in lullaby, the sister's care, the happy childhood,  
The long-pent spirit rous'd to reminiscence ;  
—A wondrous minute then—But after, in the solitary night,  
to many, many there,  
Years after—even in the hour of death—the sad refrain  
—the tune, the voice, the words,  
Resumed—the large, calm Lady walks the narrow aisle,  
The wailing melody again—the singer in the prison sings :

*O sight of shame, and pain, and dole !  
O fearful thought—a convict Soul !*



## WARBLE FOR LILAC TIME.

WARBLE me now, for joy of Lilac-time,  
Sort me, O tongue and lips, for Nature's sake, and  
sweet life's sake—and death's the same as life's,  
Souvenirs of earliest summer—birds' eggs, and the first  
berries ;  
Gather the welcome signs, (as children, with pebbles, or  
stringing shells ;)  
Put in April and May—the hylas croaking in the ponds  
—the elastic air,

Bees, butterflies, the sparrow with its simple notes,  
Blue-bird, and darting swallow—nor forget the high-  
hole flashing his golden wings,  
The tranquil sunny haze, the clinging smoke, the vapor,  
Spiritual, airy insects, humming on gossamer wings,  
Shimmer of waters, with fish in them—the cerulean  
above ;

All that is jocund and sparkling—the brooks running,  
The maple woods, the crisp February days, and the  
sugar-making ;

The robin, where he hops, bright-eyed, brown-breasted,  
With musical clear call at sunrise, and again at sunset,  
Or flitting among the trees of the apple-orchard, build-  
ing the nest of his mate ;

The melted snow of March—the willow sending forth  
its yellow-green sprouts ;

—For spring-time is here! the summer is here! and  
what is this in it and from it?

Thou, Soul, unloosen'd—the restlessness after I know  
not what ;

Come! let us lag here no longer—let us be up and  
away!

O for another world! O if one could but fly like a  
bird!

O to escape—to sail forth, as in a ship!

To glide with thee, O Soul, o'er all, in all, as a ship o'er  
the waters!

—Gathering these hints, these preludes—the blue sky,  
the grass, the morning drops of dew ;

(With additional songs—every spring will I now strike  
up additional songs,

Nor ever again forget, these tender days, the chants of  
Death as well as Life ;)

The lilac-scent, the bushes, and the dark green, heart-  
shaped leaves,

Wood violets, the little delicate pale blossoms called  
innocence,

Samples and sorts not for themselves alone, but for  
their atmosphere,

To tally, drench'd with them, tested by them,

Cities and artificial life, and all their sights and scenes,

My mind henceforth, and all its meditations—my recitatives,  
 My land, my age, my race, for once to serve in songs,  
 (Sprouts, tokens ever of death indeed the same as life,)  
 To grace the bush I love—to sing with the birds,  
 A warble for joy of Lilac-time.



### WHO LEARNS MY LESSON COMPLETE ?

- <sup>1</sup> Who learns my lesson complete ?  
 Boss, journeyman, apprentice—churchman and atheist,  
 The stupid and the wise thinker—parents and offspring  
 —merchant, clerk, porter and customer,  
 Editor, author, artist, and schoolboy—Draw nigh and  
 commence ;  
 It is no lesson—it lets down the bars to a good lesson,  
 And that to another, and every one to another still.
- <sup>2</sup> The great laws take and effuse without argument ;  
 I am of the same style, for I am their friend,  
 I love them quits and quits—I do not halt, and make  
 salaams.
- <sup>3</sup> I lie abstracted, and hear beautiful tales of things,  
 and the reasons of things ;  
 They are so beautiful, I nudge myself to listen.
- <sup>4</sup> I cannot say to any person what I hear—I cannot say  
 it to myself—it is very wonderful.
- <sup>5</sup> It is no small matter, this round and delicious globe,  
 moving so exactly in its orbit forever and ever,  
 without one jolt, or the untruth of a single  
 second ;  
 I do not think it was made in six days, nor in ten  
 thousand years, nor ten billions of years,  
 Nor plann'd and built one thing after another, as an  
 architect plans and builds a house.

<sup>6</sup> I do not think seventy years is the time of a man or  
woman,  
Nor that seventy millions of years is the time of a man  
or woman,  
Nor that years will ever stop the existence of me, or  
any one else.

<sup>7</sup> Is it wonderful that I should be immortal? as every  
one is immortal ;  
I know it is wonderful, but my eyesight is equally won-  
derful, and how I was conceived in my mother's  
womb is equally wonderful ;  
And pass'd from a babe, in the creeping trance of a  
couple of summers and winters, to articulate and  
walk—All this is equally wonderful.

<sup>8</sup> And that my Soul embraces you this hour, and we  
affect each other without ever seeing each other,  
and never perhaps to see each other, is every bit  
as wonderful.

<sup>9</sup> And that I can think such thoughts as these, is just  
as wonderful ;  
And that I can remind you, and you think them, and  
know them to be true, is just as wonderful.

<sup>10</sup> And that the moon spins round the earth, and on  
with the earth, is equally wonderful,  
And that they balance themselves with the sun and  
stars, is equally wonderful.



### THOUGHT.

OF Justice—As if Justice could be anything but the  
same ample law, expounded by natural judges  
and saviors,  
As if it might be this thing or that thing, according to  
decisions.

## MYSELF AND MINE.

<sup>1</sup> MYSELF and mine gymnastic ever,  
To stand the cold or heat—to take good aim with a  
gun—to sail a boat—to manage horses—to be-  
get superb children,  
To speak readily and clearly—to feel at home among  
common people,  
And to hold our own in terrible positions, on land and  
sea.

<sup>2</sup> Not for an embroiderer ;  
(There will always be plenty of embroiderers—I wel-  
come them also ;)  
But for the fibre of things, and for inherent men and  
women.

<sup>3</sup> Not to chisel ornaments,  
But to chisel with free stroke the heads and limbs of  
plenteous Supreme Gods, that The States may  
realize them, walking and talking.

<sup>4</sup> Let me have my own way ;  
Let others promulge the laws—I will make no account  
of the laws ;  
Let others praise eminent men and hold up peace—I  
hold up agitation and conflict ;  
I praise no eminent man—I rebuke to his face the one  
that was thought most worthy.

<sup>5</sup> (Who are you ? you mean devil ! And what are you  
secretly guilty of, all your life ?  
Will you turn aside all your life ? Will you grub and  
chatter all your life ?)

<sup>6</sup> (And who are you—blabbing by rote, years, pages,  
languages, reminiscences,  
Unwitting to-day that you do not know how to speak a  
single word ?)



<sup>7</sup> Let others finish specimens—I never finish specimens ;  
I shower them by exhaustless laws, as Nature does,  
fresh and modern continually.

<sup>8</sup> I give nothing as duties ;  
What others give as duties, I give as living impulses ;  
(Shall I give the heart's action as a duty?)

<sup>9</sup> Let others dispose of questions—I dispose of nothing  
—I arouse unanswerable questions ;  
Who are they I see and touch, and what about them ?  
What about these likes of myself, that draw me so close  
by tender directions and indirections ?

<sup>10</sup> I call to the world to distrust the accounts of my  
friends, but listen to my enemies—as I myself  
do ;  
I charge you, too, forever, reject those who would ex-  
pound me—for I cannot expound myself ;  
I charge that there be no theory or school founded out  
of me ;  
I charge you to leave all free, as I have left all free.

<sup>11</sup> After me, vista !  
O, I see life is not short, but immeasurably long ;  
I henceforth tread the world, chaste, temperate, an  
early riser, a steady grower,  
Every hour the semen of centuries—and still of centu-  
ries.

<sup>12</sup> I will follow up these continual lessons of the air,  
water, earth ;  
I perceive I have no time to lose.



## TO OLD AGE.

I SEE in you the estuary that enlarges and spreads itself  
grandly as it pours in the great Sea.

## MIRACLES.

<sup>1</sup> WHY! who makes much of a miracle?  
 As to me, I know of nothing else but miracles,  
 Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan,  
 Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the  
     sky,  
 Or wade with naked feet along the beach, just in the  
     edge of the water,  
 Or stand under trees in the woods,  
 Or talk by day with any one I love—or sleep in the bed  
     at night with any one I love,  
 Or sit at table at dinner with my mother,  
 Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car,  
 Or watch honey-bees busy around the hive, of a sum-  
     mer forenoon,  
 Or animals feeding in the fields,  
 Or birds—or the wonderfulness of insects in the air,  
 Or the wonderfulness of the sun-down—or of stars  
     shining so quiet and bright,  
 Or the exquisite, delicate, thin curve of the new moon  
     in spring;  
 Or whether I go among those I like best, and that like  
     me best—mechanics, boatmen, farmers,  
 Or among the savans—or to the soiree—or to the  
     opera,  
 Or stand a long while looking at the movements of  
     machinery,  
 Or behold children at their sports,  
 Or the admirable sight of the perfect old man, or the  
     perfect old woman,  
 Or the sick in hospitals, or the dead carried to burial,  
 Or my own eyes and figure in the glass;  
 These, with the rest, one and all, are to me miracles,  
 The whole referring—yet each distinct, and in its  
     place.

<sup>2</sup> To me, every hour of the light and dark is a mir-  
     acle,  
 Every cubic inch of space is a miracle,

Every square yard of the surface of the earth is spread  
with the same,  
Every foot of the interior swarms with the same ;  
Every spear of grass—the frames, limbs, organs, of men  
and women, and all that concerns them,  
All these to me are unspeakably perfect miracles.

<sup>3</sup> To me the sea is a continual miracle ;  
The fishes that swim—the rocks—the motion of the  
waves—the ships, with men in them,  
What stranger miracles are there?

---

## SPARKLES FROM THE WHEEL.

### 1

WHERE the city's ceaseless crowd moves on, the live-  
long day,  
Withdrawn, I join a group of children watching—I  
pause aside with them.

By the curb, toward the edge of the flagging,  
A knife-grinder works at his wheel, sharpening a great  
knife ;  
Bending over, he carefully holds it to the stone—by  
foot and knee,  
With measur'd tread, he turns rapidly—As he presses  
with light but firm hand,  
Forth issue, then, in copious golden jets,  
Sparkles from the wheel.

### 2

The scene, and all its belongings—how they seize and  
affect me !  
The sad, sharp-chinn'd old man, with worn clothes, and  
broad shoulder-band of leather ;  
Myself, effusing and fluid—a phantom curiously float-  
ing—now here absorb'd and arrested ;

The group, (an unminded point, set in a vast surrounding ;)  
The attentive, quiet children—the loud, proud, restive  
base of the streets ;  
The low, hoarse purr of the whirling stone—the light-  
press'd blade,  
Diffusing, dropping, sideways-darting, in tiny showers  
of gold,  
Sparkles from the wheel.



## EXCELSIOR.

Who has gone farthest? For lo! have not I gone farther?  
And who has been just? For I would be the most just  
person of the earth ;  
And who most cautious? For I would be more cautious ;  
And who has been happiest? O I think it is I! I think  
no one was ever happier than I ;  
And who has lavish'd all? For I lavish constantly the  
best I have ;  
And who has been firmest? For I would be firmer ;  
And who proudest? For I think I have reason to be  
the proudest son alive—for I am the son of the  
brawny and tall-topt city ;  
And who has been bold and true? For I would be the  
boldest and truest being of the universe ;  
And who benevolent? For I would show more benevo-  
lence than all the rest ;  
And who has projected beautiful words through the  
longest time? Have I not outvied him? have I  
not said the words that shall stretch through  
longer time?  
And who has receiv'd the love of the most friends? For  
I know what it is to receive the passionate love  
of many friends ;

And who possesses a perfect and enamour'd body? For  
I do not believe any one possesses a more perfect  
or enamour'd body than mine ;  
And who thinks the amplest thoughts? For I will sur-  
round those thoughts ;  
And who has made hymns fit for the earth? For I am  
mad with devouring extasy to make joyous hymns  
for the whole earth !



## MEDIUMS.

THEY shall arise in the States ;  
They shall report Nature, laws, physiology, and happi-  
ness ;  
They shall illustrate Democracy and the kosmos ;  
They shall be alimentive, amative, perceptive ;  
They shall be complete women and men—their pose  
brawny and supple, their drink water, their  
blood clean and clear ;  
They shall enjoy materialism and the sight of products  
—they shall enjoy the sight of the beef, lumber,  
bread-stuffs, of Chicago, the great city ;  
They shall train themselves to go in public to become  
orators and oratresses ;  
Strong and sweet shall their tongues be—poems and  
materials of poems shall come from their lives—  
they shall be makers and finders ;  
Of them, and of their works, shall emerge divine con-  
veyers, to convey gospels ;  
Characters, events, retrospections, shall be convey'd in  
gospels—Trees, animals, waters, shall be con-  
vey'd,  
Death, the future, the invisible faith, shall all be con-  
vey'd.



## KOSMOS.

- Who includes diversity, and is Nature,  
 Who is the amplitude of the earth, and the coarseness  
     and sexuality of the earth, and the great charity  
     of the earth, and the equilibrium also,  
 Who has not look'd forth from the windows, the eyes,  
     for nothing, or whose brain held audience with  
     messengers for nothing ;  
 Who contains believers and disbelievers—Who is the  
     most majestic lover ;  
 Who holds duly his or her triune proportion of real-  
     ism, spiritualism, and of the æsthetic, or intel-  
     lectual,  
 Who, having consider'd the Body, finds all its organs  
     and parts good ;  
 Who, out of the theory of the earth, and of his or her  
     body, understands by subtle analogies all other  
     theories,  
 The theory of a city, a poem, and of the large politics  
     of These States ;  
 Who believes not only in our globe, with its sun and  
     moon, but in other globes, with their suns and  
     moons ;  
 Who, constructing the house of himself or herself, not  
     for a day, but for all time, sees races, eras, dates,  
     generations,  
 The past, the future, dwelling there, like space, insepa-  
     rable together.



## TO A PUPIL.

- <sup>1</sup> Is reform needed ? Is it through you ?  
 The greater the reform needed, the greater the person-  
     ality you need to accomplish it.
- <sup>2</sup> You ! do you not see how it would serve to have eyes,  
     blood, complexion, clean and sweet ?

Do you not see how it would serve to have such a Body and Soul, that when you enter the crowd, an atmosphere of desire and command enters with you, and every one is impress'd with your personality?

<sup>3</sup> O the magnet! the flesh over and over!  
Go, dear friend! if need be, give up all else, and commence to-day to inure yourself to pluck, reality, self-esteem, definiteness, elevatedness;  
Rest not, till you rivet and publish yourself of your own personality.

---

#### WHAT AM I, AFTER ALL.

<sup>1</sup> WHAT am I, after all, but a child, pleas'd with the sound of my own name? repeating it over and over;  
I stand apart to hear—it never tires me.

<sup>2</sup> To you, your name also;  
Did you think there was nothing but two or three pronunciations in the sound of your name?

---

#### OTHERS MAY PRAISE WHAT THEY LIKE.

OTHERS may praise what they like;  
But I, from the banks of the running Missouri, praise nothing, in art, or aught else,  
Till it has well inhaled the atmosphere of this river—  
also the western prairie-scent,  
And fully exudes it again.

## BROTHER OF ALL, WITH GENEROUS HAND.

*(G. P., Buried February, 1870.)*

## 1

<sup>1</sup> BROTHER of all, with generous hand,  
Of thee, pondering on thee, as o'er thy tomb, I and my  
Soul,  
A thought to launch in memory of thee,  
A burial verse for thee.

<sup>2</sup> What may we chant, O thou within this tomb?  
What tablets, pictures, hang for thee, O millionaire?  
—The life thou lived'st we know not,  
But that thou walk'dst thy years in barter, 'mid the  
haunts of brokers;  
Nor heroism thine, nor war, nor glory.

<sup>3</sup> Yet lingering, yearning, joining soul with thine,  
If not thy past we chant, we chant the future,  
Select, adorn the future.

## 2

<sup>4</sup> Lo, Soul, the graves of heroes!  
The pride of lands—the gratitudes of men,  
The statues of the manifold famous dead, Old World  
and New,  
The kings, inventors, generals, poets, (stretch wide thy  
vision, Soul,)  
The excellent rulers of the races, great discoverers,  
sailors,  
Marble and brass select from them, with pictures,  
scenes,  
(The histories of the lands, the races, bodied there,  
In what they've built for, graced and graved,  
Monuments to their heroes.)

## 3

<sup>5</sup> Silent, my Soul,  
With drooping lids, as waiting, ponder'd,  
Turning from all the samples, all the monuments of  
heroes.

<sup>6</sup> While through the interior vistas,  
Noiseless uprose, phantasmic, (as, by night, Auroras of  
the North,)  
Lambent tableaux, prophetic, bodiless scenes,  
Spiritual projections.

<sup>7</sup> In one, among the city streets, a laborer's home ap-  
pear'd,  
After his day's work done, cleanly, sweet-air'd, the gas-  
light burning,  
The carpet swept, and a fire in the cheerful stove.

<sup>8</sup> In one, the sacred parturition scene,  
A happy, painless mother birth'd a perfect child.

<sup>9</sup> In one, at a bounteous morning meal,  
Sat peaceful parents, with contented sons.

<sup>10</sup> In one, by twos and threes, young people,  
Hundreds centering, walk'd the paths and streets  
and roads,  
Toward a tall-domed school.

<sup>11</sup> In one a trio, beautiful,  
Grandmother, loving daughter, loving daughter's  
daughter, sat,  
Chatting and sewing.

<sup>12</sup> In one, along a suite of noble rooms,  
'Mid plenteous books and journals, paintings on the  
walls, fine statuettes,  
Were groups of friendly journeymen, mechanics, young  
and old,  
Reading, conversing.

<sup>13</sup> All, all the shows of laboring life,  
City and country, women's, men's and children's,  
Their wants provided for, hued in the sun, and tinged  
for once with joy,  
Marriage, the street, the factory, farm, the house-room,  
lodging-room,  
Labor and toil, the bath, gymnasium, play-ground,  
library, college,  
The student, boy or girl, led forward to be taught ;  
The sick cared for, the shoeless shod—the orphan  
father'd and mother'd,  
The hungry fed, the houseless housed ;  
(The intentions perfect and divine,  
The workings, details, haply human.)

## 4

<sup>14</sup> O thou within this tomb,  
From thee, such scenes—thou stintless, lavish Giver,  
Tallying the gifts of Earth—large as the Earth,  
Thy name an Earth, with mountains, fields and rivers.

<sup>15</sup> Nor by your streams alone, you rivers,  
By you, your banks, Connecticut,  
By you, and all your teeming life, Old Thames,  
By you, Potomac, laving the ground Washington trod  
—by you Patapsco,  
You, Hudson—you, endless Mississippi—not by you  
alone,  
But to the high seas launch, my thought, his memory.

## 5

<sup>16</sup> Lo, Soul, by this tomb's lambency,  
The darkness of the arrogant standards of the world,  
With all its flaunting aims, ambitions, pleasures.

<sup>17</sup> (Old, commonplace, and rusty saws,  
The rich, the gay, the supercilious, smiled at long,  
Now, piercing to the marrow in my bones,  
Fused with each drop my heart's blood jets,  
Swim in ineffable meaning.)



<sup>18</sup> Lo, Soul, the sphere requireth, portioneth,  
To each his share, his measure,  
The moderate to the moderate, the ample to the  
ample.

<sup>19</sup> Lo, Soul, see'st thou not, plain as the sun,  
The only real wealth of wealth in generosity,  
The only life of life in goodness? .



### NIGHT ON THE PRAIRIES.

<sup>1</sup> NIGHT on the prairies ;  
The supper is over—the fire on the ground burns low ;  
The wearied emigrants sleep, wrapt in their blankets :  
I walk by myself—I stand and look at the stars, which  
I think now I never realized before.

<sup>2</sup> Now I absorb immortality and peace,  
I admire death, and test propositions.

<sup>3</sup> How plenteous ! How spiritual ! How resumé !  
The same Old Man and Soul—the same old aspirations,  
and the same content.

<sup>4</sup> I was thinking the day most splendid, till I saw what  
the not-day exhibited,  
I was thinking this globe enough, till there sprang out  
so noiseless around me myriads of other globes.

<sup>5</sup> Now, while the great thoughts of space and eternity  
fill me, I will measure myself by them ;  
And now, touch'd with the lives of other globes, arrived  
as far along as those of the earth,  
Or waiting to arrive, or pass'd on farther than those of  
the earth,

I henceforth no more ignore them, than I ignore my  
own life,  
Or the lives of the earth arrived as far as mine, or  
waiting to arrive.

<sup>6</sup> O I see now that life cannot exhibit all to me—as the  
day cannot,  
I see that I am to wait for what will be exhibited by  
death.



### ON JOURNEYS THROUGH THE STATES.

<sup>1</sup> On journeys through the States we start,  
(Ay, through the world—urged by these songs,  
Sailing henceforth to every land—to every sea ;)  
We, willing learners of all, teachers of all, and lovers  
of all.

<sup>2</sup> We have watch'd the seasons dispensing themselves,  
and passing on,  
We have said, Why should not a man or woman do as  
much as the seasons, and effuse as much ?

<sup>3</sup> We dwell a while in every city and town ;  
We pass through Kanada, the north-east, the vast valley  
of the Mississippi, and the Southern States ;  
We confer on equal terms with each of The States,  
We make trial of ourselves, and invite men and women  
to hear ;  
We say to ourselves, Remember, fear not, be candid,  
promulge the body and the Soul ;  
Dwell a while and pass on—Be copious, temperate,  
chaste, magnetic,  
And what you effuse may then return as the seasons  
return,  
And may be just as much as the seasons.

## LEAVES OF GRASS.

### SAVANTISM.

THITHER, as I look, I see each result and glory retracing  
itself and nestling close, always obligated ;  
Thither hours, months, years—thither trades, compacts,  
establishments, even the most minute ;  
Thither every-day life, speech, utensils, politics, persons,  
estates ;  
Thither we also, I with my leaves and songs, trustful,  
admirant,  
As a father, to his father going, takes his children  
along with him.

---

### LOCATIONS AND TIMES.

LOCATIONS and times—what is it in me that meets them  
all, whenever and wherever, and makes me at  
home ?  
Forms, colors, densities, odors—what is it in me that  
corresponds with them ?

---

### THOUGHT.

OF Equality—As if it harm'd me, giving others the  
same chances and rights as myself—As if it  
were not indispensable to my own rights that  
others possess the same.

---

### OFFERINGS.

A THOUSAND perfect men and women appear,  
Around each gathers a cluster of friends, and gay children  
and youths, with offerings.

I hen

## TESTS.

Or <sup>all</sup> submit to them, where they sit, inner, secure,  
unapproachable to analysis, in the Soul ;

Not traditions—not the outer authorities are the judges  
—they are the judges of outer authorities, and  
of all traditions ;

They corroborate as they go, only whatever corrobo-  
rates themselves, and touches themselves ;

For all that, they have it forever in themselves to cor-  
roborate far and near, without one exception.

## THE TORCH.

ON my northwest coast in the midst of the night, a  
fishermen's group stands watching ;

Out on the lake, that expands before them, others are  
spearing salmon ;

The canoe, a dim shadowy thing, moves across the  
black water,

Bearing a Torch a-blaze at the prow.

## TO YOU.

LET us twain walk aside from the rest ;

Now we are together privately, do you discard cere-  
mony ;

Come! vouchsafe to me what has yet been vouchsafed  
to none—Tell me the whole story,

Let us talk of death—unbosom all freely,

Tell me what you would not tell your brother, wife,  
husband, or physician.

## GODS.

1

THOUGHT of the Infinite—the All !  
Be thou my God.

2

Lover Divine, and Perfect Comrade !  
Waiting, content, invisible yet, but certain,  
Be thou my God.

3

Thou—thou, the Ideal Man !  
Fair, able, beautiful, content, and loving,  
Complete in Body, and dilate in Spirit,  
Be thou my God.

4

O Death—(for Life has served its turn ;)  
Opener and usher to the heavenly mansion !  
Be thou my God.

5

Aught, aught, of mightiest, best, I see, conceive, or  
know,  
(To break the stagnant tie—thee, thee to free, O Soul,)  
Be thou my God.

6

Or thee, Old Cause, whene'er advancing ;  
All great Ideas, the races' aspirations,  
All that exalts, releases thee, my Soul !  
All heroisms, deeds of rapt enthusiasts,  
Be ye my Gods !

7

Or Time and Space !  
Or shape of Earth, divine and wondrous !  
Or shape in I myself—or some fair shape, I, viewing,  
worship,  
Or lustrous orb of sun, or star by night,  
Be ye my Gods.



## TO ONE SHORTLY TO DIE.

## 1

<sup>1</sup> FROM all the rest I single out you, having a message  
for you :

You are to die—Let others tell you what they please, I  
cannot prevaricate,

I am exact and merciless, but I love you—There is no  
escape for you.

<sup>2</sup> Softly I lay my right hand upon you—you just feel it,  
I do not argue—I bend my head close, and half en-  
velop it,

I sit quietly by—I remain faithful,

I am more than nurse, more than parent or neighbor,

I absolve you from all except yourself, spiritual, bodily  
—that is eternal—you yourself will surely escape,

The corpse you will leave will be but excrementitious.

## 2

<sup>3</sup> The sun bursts through in unlooked-for directions!  
Strong thoughts fill you, and confidence—you smile!

You forget you are sick, as I forget you are sick,

You do not see the medicines—you do not mind the  
weeping friends—I am with you,

I exclude others from you—there is nothing to be com-  
miserated,

I do not commiserate—I congratulate you.

## NOW FINALE TO THE SHORE.

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### NOW FINALE TO THE SHORE.

Now finale to the shore !  
Now, land and life, finale, and farewell !  
Now Voyager depart ! (much, much for thee is yet in  
store ;) )  
Often enough hast thou adventur'd o'er the seas,  
Cautiously cruising, studying the charts,  
Duly again to port, and hawser's tie, returning :  
—But now obey thy cherish'd, secret wish,  
Embrace thy friends—leave all in order ;  
To port, and hawser's tie, no more returning,  
Depart upon thy endless cruise, old Sailor !

---

### SHUT NOT YOUR DOORS, &c.

SHUT not your doors to me, proud libraries,  
For that which was lacking on all your well-fill'd  
shelves, yet needed most, I bring ;  
Forth from the army, the war emerging—a book I  
have made,  
The words of my book nothing—the drift of it every-  
thing ;

A book separate, not link'd with the rest, nor felt by  
the intellect,  
But you, ye untold latencies, will thrill to every page ;  
Through Space and Time fused in a chant, and the  
flowing, eternal Identity,  
To Nature, encompassing these, encompassing God—  
to the joyous, electric All,  
To the sense of Death—and accepting, exulting in  
Death, in its turn, the same as life,  
The entrance of Man I sing.

---

## THOUGHT.

As they draw to a close,  
Of what underlies the precedent songs—of my aims in  
them ;  
Of the seed I have sought to plant in them ;  
Of joy, sweet joy, through many a year, in them ;  
(For them—for them have I lived—In them my work  
is done ;)   
Of many an aspiration fond—of many a dream and  
plan,  
Of you, O mystery great!—to place on record faith in  
you, O death !  
—To compact you, ye parted, diverse lives !  
To put rapport the mountains, and rocks, and streams,  
And the winds of the north, and the forests of oak and  
pine,  
With you, O soul of man.

---

## THE UNTOLD WANT.

THE untold want, by life and land ne'er granted,  
Now, Voyager, sail thou forth, to seek and find.

PORTALS.

WHAT are those of the known, but to ascend and enter  
the Unknown?  
And what are those of life, but for Death?



THESE CAROLS.

THESE Carols, sung to cheer my passage through the  
world I see,  
For completion, I dedicate to the Invisible World.



THIS DAY, O SOUL.

THIS day, O Soul, I give you a wondrous mirror;  
Long in the dark, in tarnish and cloud it lay—But the  
cloud has pass'd, and the tarnish gone;  
... Behold, O Soul! it is now a clean and bright mir-  
ror,  
Faithfully showing you all the things of the world.



WHAT PLACE IS BESIEGED?

WHAT place is besieged, and vainly tries to raise the  
siege?  
Lo! I send to that place a commander, swift, brave,  
immortal;  
And with him horse and foot—and parks of artil-  
lery,  
And artillery-men, the deadliest that ever fired gun.

## TO THE READER AT PARTING.

Now, dearest comrade, lift me to your face,  
We must separate awhile—Here! take from my lips  
    this kiss ;  
Whoever you are, I give it especially to you ;  
*So long!*—And I hope we shall meet again.

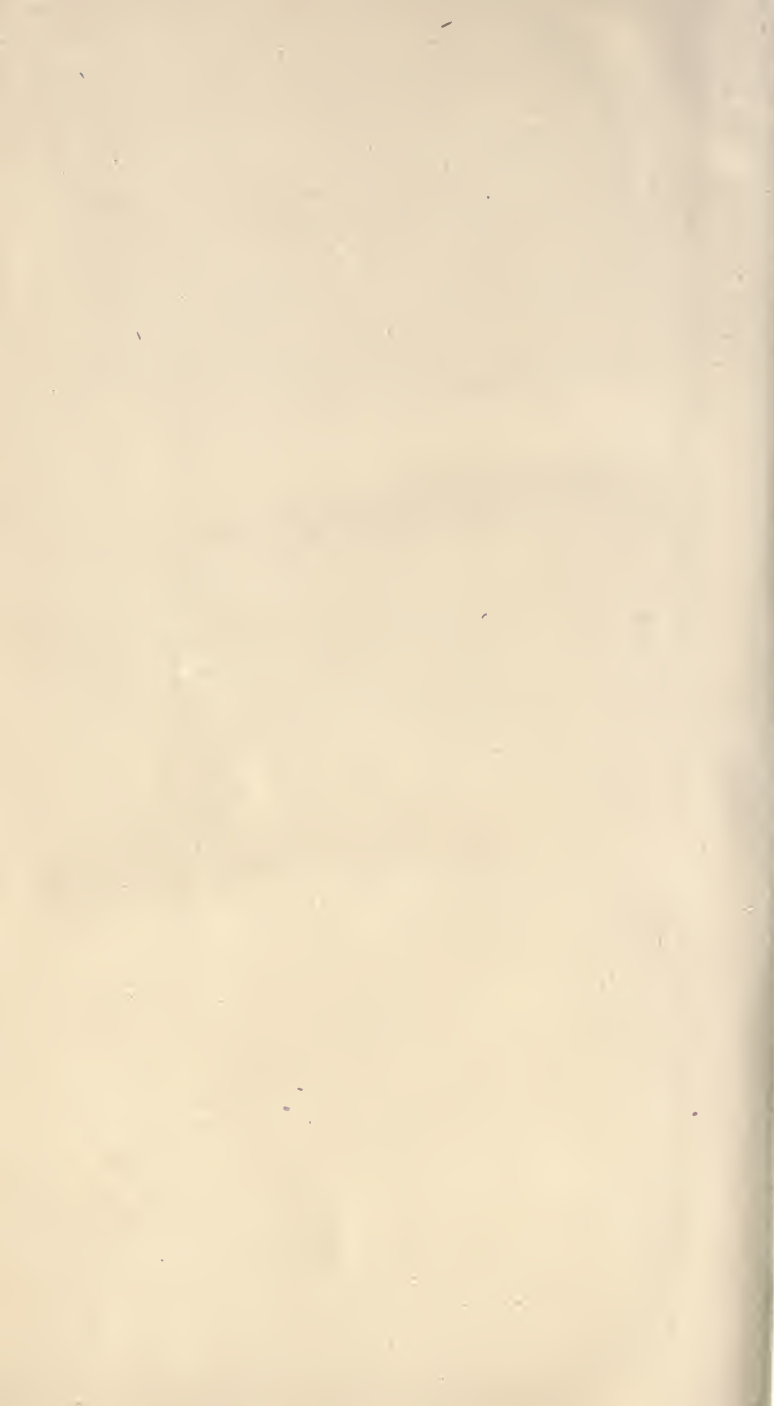


## JOY, SHIPMATE, JOY!

Joy! shipmate—joy!  
(Pleas'd to my Soul at death I cry ;)  
Our life is closed—our life begins ;  
The long, long anchorage we leave,  
The ship is clear at last—she leaps!  
She swiftly courses from the shore ;  
Joy! shipmate—joy!









L32  
1872





